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Heartbeat of Nepal: The Pañcai Bājā

Carol Tingey

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Heartbeat of Nepal: The Pancaibaja

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Carol Tingey

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FOREWORD

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In this present age of rapid change the documentation of our Nepalese musical traditions has become an urgent task, as it can pave the way for a proper understanding and evaluation and, hopefully, preservation of our culture. Today Nepal is realizing the need to preserve its musical heritage, but to date we do not have the facilities to train scholars in the required methods of ethnomusicological fieldwork.

Now, the British ethnomusicologist Dr. Carol Tingey is presenting her erudite study in the various pañcai bājā traditions of Nepal. Although the title 'Heartbeat of Nepal' suggests a flourishing music tradition, the book reveals the deplorable decline of this once dynamic musical tradition. Pañcai bājā is the festive and ritual music of the Damāi tailor-musicians who are named after one of their drums, the damāhā. Traditionally, the Damāi supply the marriage music of the Nepali speaking castes and other ethnic groups in the hills of Nepal. The other chief function of the Damāi musicians is to play ritual music at various shrines. In particular these important ritual ensembles with their unique repertoire and musical instruments are threatened by total neglect.

Dr. Tingey spent altogether three years studying the pañcai bājā traditions first at Gorkha where she learned to play all the pañcai bājā instruments, then in many other parts of the country including the Far West and the East. During this research in the remote areas she risked her life several times while gathering information!

Her study presents the various pañcai bājā ensembles, their musical repertoire and the art of instrument making. This book documents the results of her research in a most lucid style, satisfying the scholar as well as the lay reader. Since writing this book Dr. Tingey has been awarded her

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Ph.D. for her thesis 'Nepalese Pañcai Bājā Music: An Auspicious Ensemble in a Changing Society' (London 1990).

The Royal Nepal Academy feels proud to have been able to assist Dr. Tingey in her research for one year with the facilities of our Research Fellowship. We very much hope that Dr. Tingey's work will find widespread appreciation inside and outside Nepal.

Isvar Baral
Vice-chancellor
Royal Nepal Academy
Kathmandu, September 1990

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PREFACE

This study of the Nepalese shawm and kettledrum band - pañcai bājā - was written following a 14-month period of field research in Nepal, March 1987 - May 1988, whilst the author held a one-year Research Fellowship at the Royal Nepal Academy, Kathmandu.

It is intended primarily as an ethnomusicological study, but it is hoped that it will be of use to general readers interested in the cultural life of Himalayan peoples. The musical tradition is placed in its historical and cultural contexts and the ways in which the band and its function are adapting in response to the changing society are examined.

I should like to acknowledge the financial and official support of the Royal Nepal Academy and the financial assistance of the British Academy which made this work possible.

Thanks are due to Śri Rām Śaran Darnāl for his invaluable guidance and support throughout my research period, and to Dr. Richard Widdess for his suggestions concerning the manuscript. I wish to thank Dr. Niels Gutschow for providing the Site Plan of Gorkha Darbar, and Beverley Tingey for her help with proof-reading and the preparation of the glossary, and also Śri Nutan Sharma for his translation work.

I am sincerely grateful to my friend and research assistant in Gorkha, Śri Gopal Pariyar, who not only taught me to play the pañcai bājā instruments, but was a key figure in 'opening doors' for me in the local community. I should also like to thank the many people who generously offered their help and hospitality to me in the various places I visited, but especially my friends, the musicians of Gorkha.

London, October 1988

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Note on the Text

Nepali words are italicized on their first appearance in the text only. A full glossary is included, but as far as possible English equivalents have been substituted for Nepali words. Words, such as place-names (Kathmandu, Gorkha), which have become familiar in the West are spelt without the addition of diacriticals.

The system of transliteration which has been employed corresponds with that of Turner (1931:xix) and is as follows:

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ
ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	ं	ः	
e	ai	o	au	aṃ	aḥ	
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ		
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ		
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ		
c	ch	j	jh	ñ		
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण		
t	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ		
त	थ	द	ध	न		
t	th	d	dh	n		
प	फ	ब	भ	म		
p	ph	b	bh	m		
य	र	ल	व			
y	r	l	v/w			
श	ष	स	ह			
ś	ṣ	s	h			

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1

INTRODUCTION

Nepal, a country as diverse demographically as it is topographically, is populated by over thirty culturally and linguistically distinct ethnic groups. The various indigenous Tibeto-Burman groups of the foothills and higher altitudes, with their animist and Buddhist religions, were infiltrated from the south and west from the late-elev nth century by Hindu migrants from many parts of North India. The new settlers brought the naubat, a raucous ensemble of shawms and kettledrums, which, once Nepalized, became the pañcai bāja.

Today, the pañcai bājā is a common feature of village life for a large proportion of Nepalese minority groups. It is a mixed ensemble of wind instruments (sahanai, narsiṅga, karnāl), drums (damāhā, dholaki, ṭyāmko), and cymbals (jhyāli or jhyāmta). The ensemble is found, with regional variation, across the country from east to west, and from the Terai in the south to the mid-altitude dwellers of the Himalayan foothills (pahāḍ), wherever Hindu Nepali castes have settled. Only amongst the high altitude dwellers, such as the Sherpas and Tibetan peoples of the northern border is the ensemble not in use.

Pañcai bājā is played exclusively by a caste of professional musicians

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- the damāi - whose name is taken from the large kettledrum which characterizes the band, the damāhā. Their supplementary occupation is tailoring, and they are also employed as agricultural labourers. Together with other musician and occupational castes, i.e. kāmi (blacksmiths), sārki (tanners and shoemakers), bādi (musicians, tanners and drum-makers), gāine (itinerant minstrels), the damāi enjoy an extremely depressed social status, being the out-casts of society, from whom food and water may not be accepted, and contact with whom demands ritual purification. Despite their untouchability, the damāi are indispensible to Nepalese society as both tailors and musicians, and in the latter capacity they assume an auspicious quality.

The uses and functions of the pañcai bājā are diverse. It is a fundamental requirement for all Hindu rites de passage such as weddings and the sacred thread investiture ceremony for young high-caste boys, vratabandha. It plays for the calendrical cycle of festivals, both agricultural (e.g. hile jātrā, bajāune ropaī), and sacred (e.g. Caite and ṭhūlo dasaī's, Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī), and leads civil processions and festivities of all sorts (e.g. the birthdays of the royal family, the triumphal procession of the successful candidate in a local (pañcāyat) election. However, although a large proportion of its repertoire is purely secular entertainment music (e.g. folk-song tunes, film music), the contexts in which the pañcai bājā plays are, virtually without exception, sacred or semi-sacred in character, and the ensemble is fulfilling an auspicious function.

In the Kathmandu Valley, the Newar kusle (or jugi) caste of tailor-musicians have affinities with the damāi, serving their community as shawm-players in combination with music groups of a variety of other castes, and providing the music for wedding processions, on clarinet, trumpet, euphonium, and snare, tenor and bass drums in place of the 'old-fashioned' traditional instruments.

The ritual duties of the damāi include providing music at temples for the daily pūjās (offerings), during blood sacrifices and for other offerings made for the presiding deities, and for ritual processions (jātrā) of deities during festivals. The composition of ritual ensembles varies considerably, the minimum requirement being a single

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nagārā (large kettledrum). In Central Nepal, a common nucleus ensemble consists of nagārā, rāsa (sahanai), and karnāl, which may be expanded by the addition of a range of natural trumpets, such as dhop bānā, bijuli bānā (also known as nāg-beli bājā), bheri, sikhār, bāno and kāhal. This type of ritual music is for divine, rather than human consumption.

The question of the function of the ensemble is a complex one. Certainly, in all contexts it appears to have an auspicious role, but it also acts as a signaller (e.g. to announce the departure of the bride), as a status symbol - a family's economic standing may be determined by the number of musicians playing for their son's wedding - and as an entertainer. The disparity between the auspicious function of the band and the inauspicious status of its musicians is a striking one, but one that is not unique to Nepal - on the contrary, it appears to be a fairly widespread phenomenon (Baily 1976; Day 1977; Merriam 1964, 1973). A principal aim of the present study is to explore the concept of the 'auspiciousness' of the pañcai bājā and to examine the ways in which its function is being adapted in response to a changing society.

An exhaustive study of the Nepalese pañcai bājā is beyond the scope of this book. Rather, it examines the ensemble as found in one area of West-Central Nepal, in the wider context of the tradition as found across the country. The bands of this area - Gorkha - cannot be regarded as typical or unique, because of the individuality and the regional variation which is found. A wide range of peoples including Thakali, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rāi and Limbu have adopted the practice of having a pañcai bājā to play at their weddings. Apart from intrinsic differences between bands, in its various localities, the pañcai bājā has adapted to meet the requirements of its patrons (e.g. playing for the Magar ghanto nāc and the Limbu dhān nāc). Similarly, the ritual duties of a temple ensemble will be determined by the requirements of the deities concerned.

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Broadly speaking, the tradition as found in the Nepalese foothills can be divided into two main culture areas - the West-Central - Eastern and the Far-Western traditions. Of the former, four sub-strata may be identified, differentiated according to the composition of the ensembles, their repertoires and the functions for which they play, and corresponding with the geographical locations in which they are found. These are, from west to east:

a) North-west Pokhara (Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, Kaski, etc.)
b) Central (Lamjung, Gorkhā, Dhardiṅg, Nuwakoṭ, Kabhre-Palanchok)
c) Kathmandu Valley
d) Eastern (east of Kathmandu Valley)

(See Map 1, overleaf).

The Far-western tradition (Jumla-Jajarkot westwards), is essentially a drumming one, with ensembles of up to thirty-six damāhā playing responsorially with a master-drummer. Resident in this area is the damāi sub-caste, huḍki - players of the hour-glass drum, huḍka. Further research undoubtedly will reveal interesting comparisons and contrasts between these diverse but related pañcai bājā traditions.

Ethnomusicological research in Nepal is still in its infancy. Since the pioneering work of Dr. Arnold Bake in 1931 and 1955-56 (resulting in approximately thirty unpublished papers), relatively little work has been done on any of Nepal's many musical traditions. For the music of some groups, not even preliminary documentation has been achieved. Nepalese musical instruments have received some attention (Ballinger & Bajracarya 1960; Wiehler-Schneider & Wieler 1980; Darnāl, R.S. BS2043a, BS2044a, BS2044b; Divas 1977; Lobsiger-Dellenbach 1954), and the lists of instruments compiled by Campbell (1837) and Wright (1877) provide a useful diachronic perspective. Of the many ethnic groups and castes of Nepal, the music of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley have received most attention (Hoerburger 1970, 1975; Lienhard 1974, 1984; Wiehler-Schneider & Wiehler 1980; Wegner 1986, 1987, 1988), and the gāine tradition has been well documented in a series of articles (Darnal, R.S. BS2043b; Helffer 1977; Macdonald 1966, 1975; Helffer & Macdonald 1966, 1968, 1975). On the musics of peoples living outside the Kathmandu Valley, little work has been done. Gaborieau and Helffer collaborated on material collected in Western Nepal and Kumaon to

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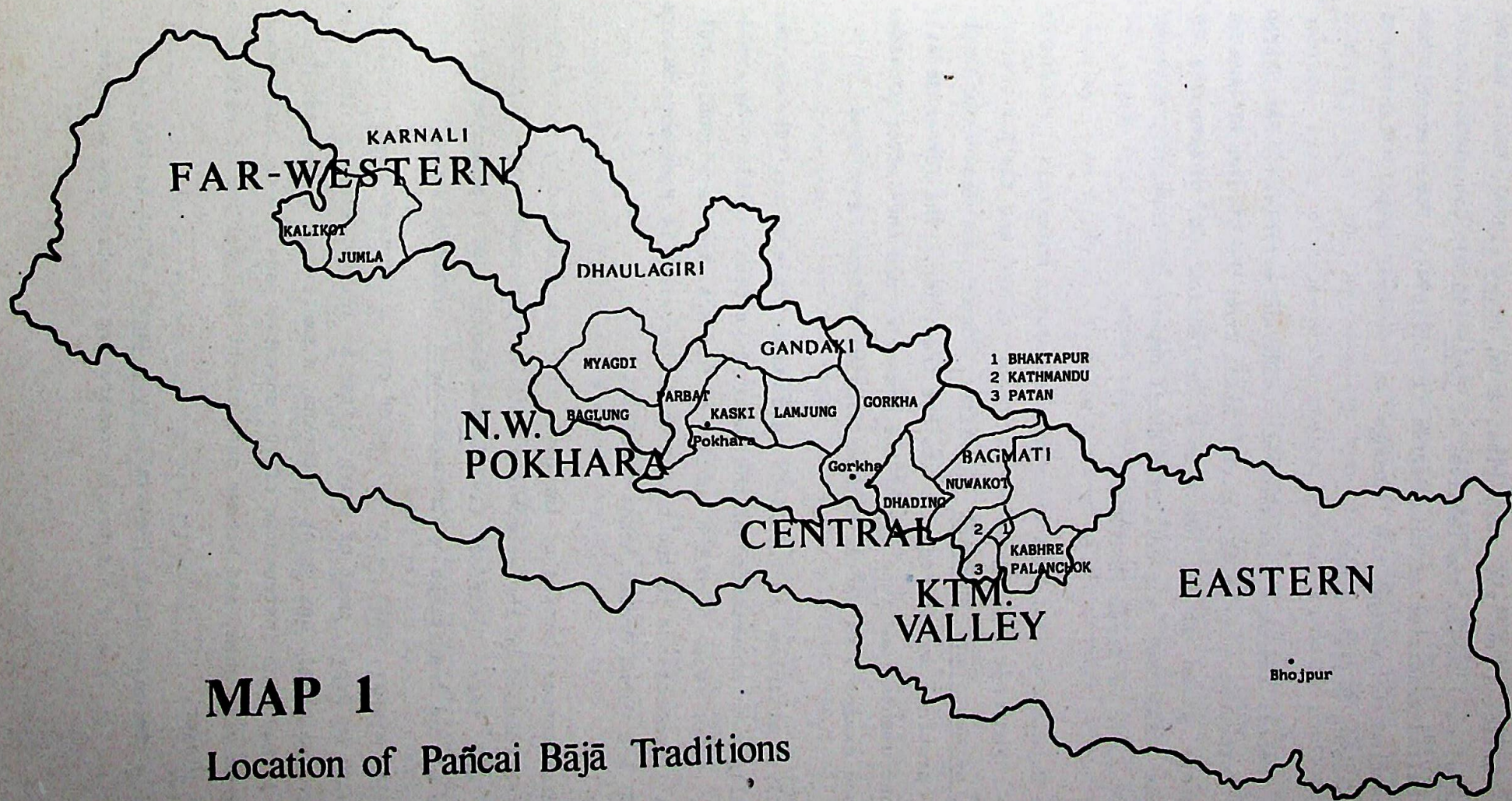

MAP 1

Location of Pañcai Bājā Traditions

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produce articles on the hour-glass drum, huḍka (1974), and a ballad (jai-bhama) sung during the festival of tihār (1969). Gaborieau focused on the ballad tradition of this region (1973, 1974). Some research has been carried out amongst the Gurungs of Central Nepal (Lahtinen & Lahtinen 1978; Moisala 1984).

In the Nepali language, the numerous books and articles by Ram Sharan Darnāl introduce a range of topics. Apart from the studies of musical instruments given above, there is a collection of biographies of musicians (BS2038a) and collected short papers on classical, folk and military music of Nepal (BS2038b).

On the Nepalese pañcai bājā there are few source materials. Helffer's article 'Fanfares villageoises au Nepal' (1969) and the L.P. record Castes de musiciens au Népal (Helffer, Gaborieau, Jest & Macdonald 1969), provide an introduction to the tradition. The former details the instruments and function of the ensemble, and the latter provides some good examples of pañcai bājā wedding music from East Nepal.

Similarly, articles in Nepali on this subject are scant. The customs and religious observances of the damāi have been tackled by Prakāś Darnāl, which was also the subject of his M.A. thesis (unpublished). General introductions to the tradition are provided by Mahānanda Sapkota (BS2027) and Purna Prakāś Nepāl (BS2033).

The socio-economic status of the damāi has been examined by two writers. Bouillier focuses on the economic relationship between the occupational castes and their patrons (1977), and Seddon (1979) accounts for the decline of the traditional patronage (biṣṭa) system in Nepal.

For this study, data were collected over a fourteen-month period of field-work in Nepal, most of which (after an initial stage of intensive language training), was spent in Gorkha, a small town in Central Nepal. Here, I had the instruments of the ensemble made for me, had lessons in how to play them, and became participant in local pañcai bājās as a sahanai player.

Following the major Hindu festival, ṭhūlo dasaĩ (which marked the half-way point in the field trip), comparative research was commenced in

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the form of a series of condensed field trips (mostly of about one week's duration), to shrines at which ritual ensembles were known to be employed. These satellite studies were undertaken in order to examine a range of musical instruments used in ritual contexts, to compare the composition of the various ensembles, their repertoires, playing styles and the functions they fulfil, and to discover the various types of payment for musical duties, focusing particularly on gūthi institutions (land based organizations which support the ritual activities and personnel of temples). Similarly, short satellite studies were carried out in Bhojpur (East Nepal), Jumla and Kalikot (West Nepal), Baglung and Kaski (West-Central Nepal) districts in order to place the Gorkha pañcai bājā tradition in the wider context of the band as it is found in its various forms in the country as a whole (see Map 1).

Gorkha was chosen as the research base for a number of reasons, the primary one being that the traditional ritual musical duties are observed at the Gorakhnāth and Kālikā shrines at Gorkha Darbār, still using the ancient ensembles of instruments which are specifically for ritual purposes. A second reason for choosing Gorkha was that the size of the settlement and the ethnic and economic diversity of the Gorkha population facilitated witnessing a variety of styles of wedding (for which the pañcai bājā is indispensible), including those of Newār, Magar, damāi, sārki, brahmin and chetri, from small-scale, local, village weddings, to the expensive 'modern style' wedding involving motorized transportation and a hotel reception.

Thirdly, the musicianship and the range of the repertoire of Gorkha musicians were important factors. Traditional items such as asāre, phāgu, beuli māgne dhūn and khyāli and jhyāure are played as well as modern folk-song and film tunes. Obsolete items of repertoire were still in the memories of several of the older musicians. The narsiṅga playing technique is perhaps the most sophisticated to be found in the Himalayas, employing circular breathing and a type of flutter tonguing, and producing extended melodic phrases.

Gorkha is a major cross-roads for communication and trade in the hills of Central Nepal, and during wedding seasons, pañca bājā from the

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surrounding villages, such as Phinām, Gāikur, Mel Bisāuni and Kokhe (see Map 2), frequently come to or pass through Gorkha whilst playing as part of the wedding procession (janti). Local musicians sometimes go along with these visiting bands, especially if their relatives are playing. Furthermore, for big weddings, a large number of narsiṅga may be required, and musicians will be called from outlying villages to make up the number. During a damāi wedding, the roles of guest and musician are complimentary. Thus, there is constant interaction between musicians, and the Gorakhkāli ensemble may be viewed as a link in a network of bands, related by both musical and kinship ties. In this study, the Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā will be viewed not as an isolated band, but as a focal point in a nexus of musical ensembles.

Finally, practical considerations favoured Gorkha, such as the accessibility of Kathmandu (an eight-hour bus journey away). The musicians of Gorkha were extremely co-operative, gave me a warm welcome, and were helpful and enthusiastic about my research project.

The town of Gorkha lies in the foothills of the Gaṇḍakī Zone of Central Nepal, at an altitude of 1115 meters, 153Km north-west of Kathmandu (Map 2). The town takes its name from the deity Gorakhnāth, whose shrine, an important centre of pilgrimage, lies in a cave above the town. It was from Gorkha, in 1768, that King Pṛthvinārāyaṇ Śāha set out to conquer the cities of the Kathmandu Valley, and founded the unified country of Nepal from the many tiny principalities.

Today, Gorkha is a small market town (Plate 1) with a population of 6,000 (Census 1981), and is the administrative centre of Gorkha district (jillā). Traders travel to Gorkha from outlying villages as far as four or five days' walk away, to purchase supplies or to take buses to Kathmandu, Pokhara and Terai towns. Before the building of the motor road, Gorkha was a mid-point on the main Kathmandu-Pokhara trade route, the eastern half of which was also a ritual processional (jātrā) route (e.g. during the festival of ṭhūlo dasaĩ). For at least two hundred years (probably much longer), Gorkha has been an important place of pilgrimage for devotees of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth. Thus, for one reason or another, Gorkha has occupied a prominent place in the history of Nepal, and remains an important centre today.

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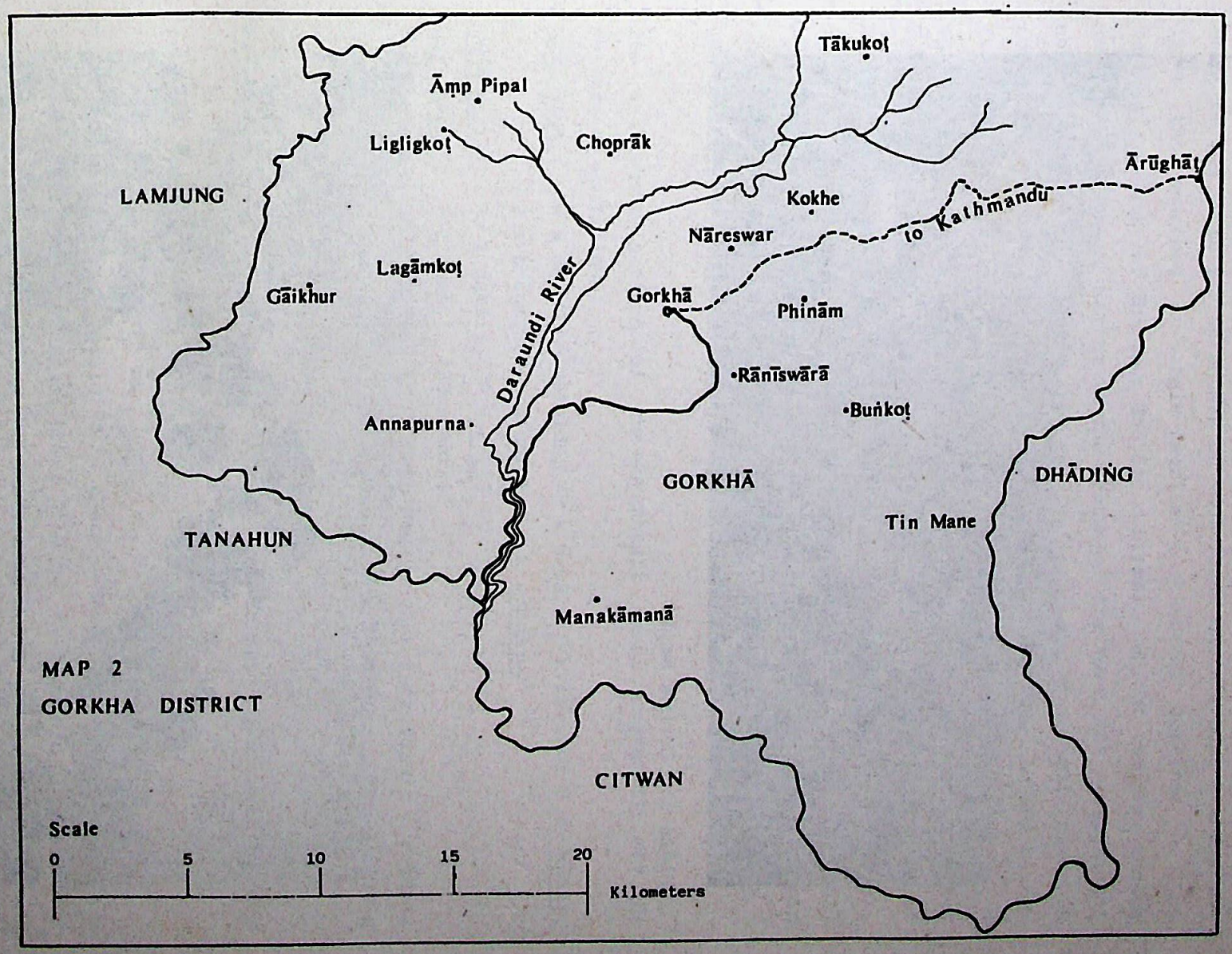

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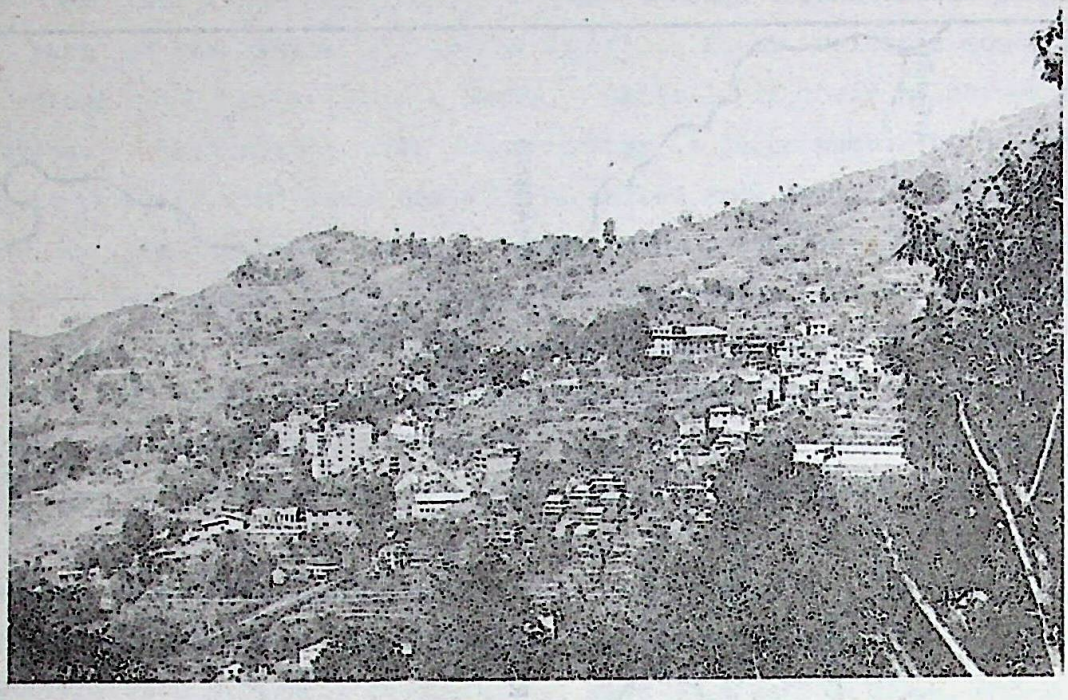

Plate 1: Gorkha Bajār

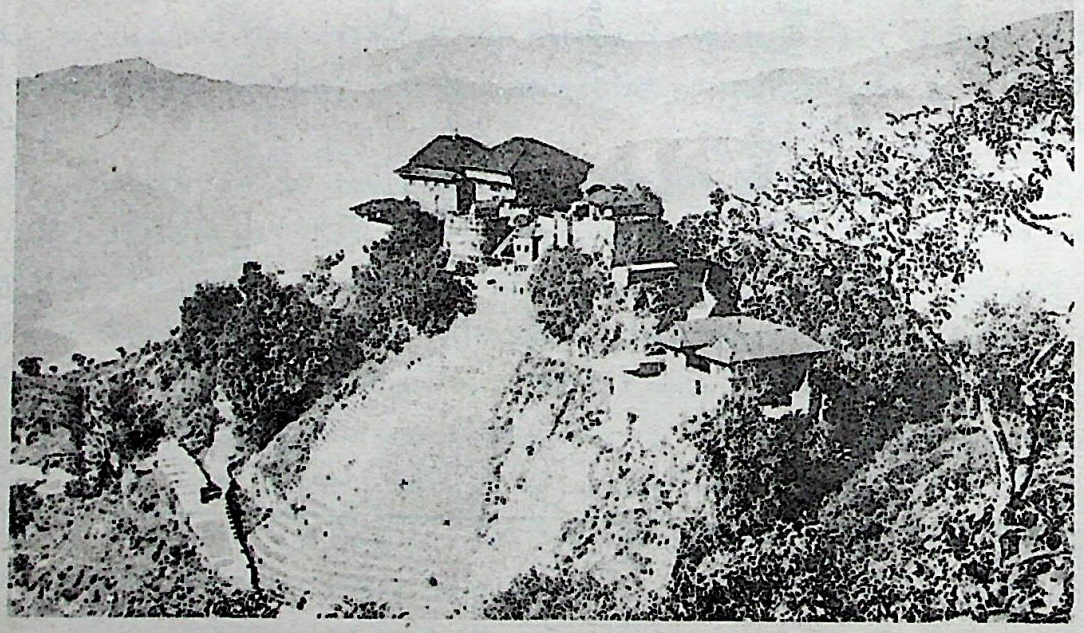

Plate 2: Gorkha Darbār

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The town is laid out in the traditional way, reflecting the caste hierarchy of the society, with houses of individual caste groups - and sometimes the branches of single families - clustered together in the various hamlets of the town and its environs. Whilst the pure castes inhabit the areas nearest to the centre of the town, the occupational castes (damāi and sārki), are marginalized, living in small clusters north of the market (bajār), mid-way between the town and the Darbār (see Map 3, overleaf), apart from the blacksmiths, whose community is on the north-eastern edge of the bajār. The old bajār area is almost exclusively Newār - the trading and economically dominant sector of Gorkha society, many Newārs being the patrons (biṣṭa) of the damāi, who serve them as tailors and musicians. Immediately above Ṭhūlo Āgan, the central square of the bajār, is Bāhungāũ, domicile of the brāhmin community. To the west of Ṭuṇḍikhel - the parade ground and barracks - are settlement groups of Newārs, Magars, sārki and gāine.

The settlement pattern of the Gorakhkāli damāi community may be enumerated as follows:

Sati Pipal: 4 x damāi households; (3 x Newār; 8 x chetri; 5 x kāsai; 2 x brāhmin; 5 x sārki; 2 x gubhaju)

Rānāthok: 15 x damāi; (2 x Jogi)

Gairigāũ: 5 x damāi; (33 x sārki)

Pokharāthok: 10 x damāi; (3 x Thapa Magar; 2 x Rānā Busal; 3 x kāmi)

Sāt Dhure: 4 x damāi; (2 x Newār; 3 x Rānā Magar; 10 x Gelaṅg Magar)

Jogigāũ: (8 x Jogi)

Haṭiyāthok: (4 x Darbār and government buildings; 1 x Thakuri; 3 x Newār; 2 x Magar; 1 x Kabāse)

(See Map 3).

Most of the musicians employed by the Darbār and who serve the Gorkha populace, live in this area, apart from two settlements north-east of the Darbār, at Mel Bisāuni - 7 damāi households - and Sati Pipal - 4 households, and one family who moved recently from Pokharāthok to Lakśmī Bajār, about 6Km south of Gorkha Bajār.

Thus, 60% of households on the slope of the ridge between the bajār and the Darbār are those of depressed castes, with 27% being those of the

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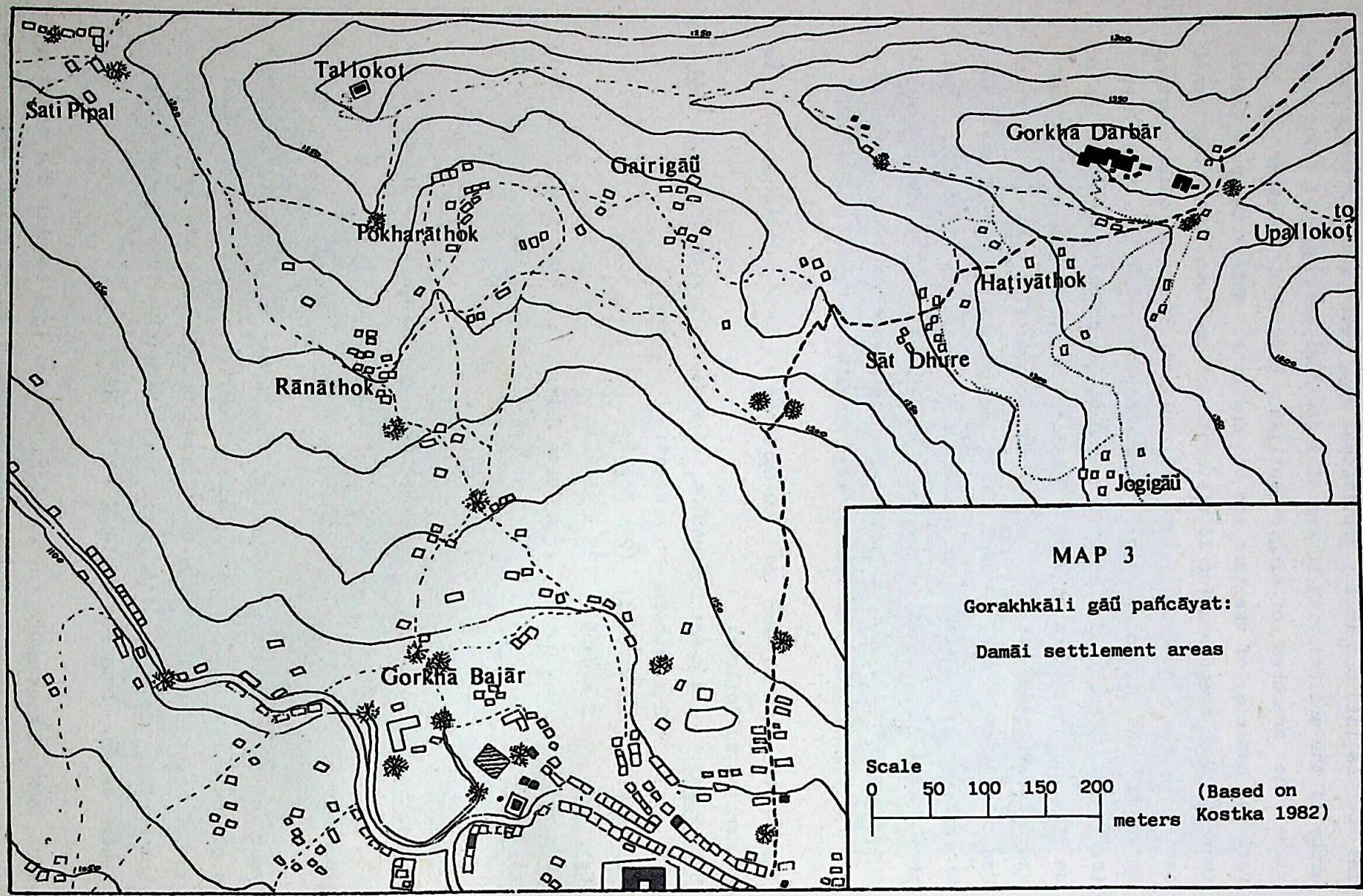

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damāi. No occupational castes live in the immediate vicinity of the Darbār. The mixed population of Sati Pipal distorts the statistics a little. This is a recently developed area which has not followed the traditional caste-based pattern of settlement - perhaps an indication that a more liberal-minded attitude towards caste may be emerging. Similarly, one damāi, retired from the army, has been able to build a large new house in Pādeli, a predominantly Newār area of Gorkha Bajār.

At an altitude 270 meters above the town, on the ridge rising to the north, stands Gorkha Darbār (Plate 2), erected on a site immediately above the sacred cave of Gorakhnāth, and at a point said to be the place where Dravya Śāha, founder of the Śāha dynasty, having conquered Gorkha in 1559, plunged his torch into the ground. It was here that Prthvinārāyan Śāha was born in 1722. The palace occupies an excellent strategic position, being situated on the Hanumān Banjyāṅ Pass and lying between two river valleys - the Darauṇḍi to the west and the Buṛī Gaṇḍakī to the east. To the north tower the high Himālaya - Manaslu, Himālculi and Gaṇeś Himāl, and to the south, the Marsyaṅdī River.

Within the Darbār complex there are a number of small shrines including those of Paśupatināth, Caṇḍī, Gaṇeś and Hanumān, but the two most important are those of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth, respectively the family goddess (kul-devatā) and protecting deity (iṣṭa-devatā) of the Śāha dynasty. As far as we know, since the time of Rām Śāha (1606-36), twenty-four damāi musicians have been employed at the Darbār, to play in the three resident ensembles - the nagārā bānās of Gorakhnāth and Kālikā, and the pañcai bājā.

The Kālikā Darbār at Gorkha is part of a network of Mother Goddess shrines in Central Nepal. Kālikā has her own constellation of sister deities in the immediate vicinity, including Chimkesarimāī, Manakāmanā, Bageswarī and Liglikoṭ Kālikā. Gorkha also represents a link in a chain of Mother Goddess shrines from Lamjuṅg to Kathmandu, including Lamjuṅg Darbār, Sallyankoṭ and Nuwākoṭ, each having its own local family of sister shrines.

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2

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The origin of the pañcai bājā lies in the Middle Eastern military band (ṭabl khāna) which was carried into India by Islamic crusaders from the eleventh century onwards, and probably arrived in Nepal with Rajput refugees during the fourteenth century.

The earliest evidence that we have of kettledrums and natural trumpets combined in ensemble dates from the pre-Islamic Sāsānian Empire, c.A.D. 600. Bas-reliefs ast Ṭāq-i-Bustān include a stag-hunt scene in which two musical ensembles are depicted. The group on the left of the scene apparently consists of a shawm, a tambourine and two mouth organs, and six musicians comprise the band on the right, playing what appear to be a large kettledrum, three natural straight trumpets, a small kettledrum (perhaps a pair), and an hour-glass drum (Farmer 1939:76-8).

Although mixed ensembles such as this have been found that predate those of the Muslim crusaders, still, it is the latter that provide the direct antecedent of the pañcai bājā-type band, corresponding in instrumentation, function and auspicious quality. In early sources, a variety of terms are found which imply this type of ensemble, such as nauba, naubat, ṭabl khāna and naqqara khāna. The first written source which may refer to such an ensemble is in the Kitāb al-aghānī (Book of Songs) of Al-Iṣfahānī (d.967), dating from the early tenth century. Here, the term nauba is used to refer to a group of musicians. A little later, the term nauba was adopted for the periodic performance of the khalif's

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band (ṭabl khāna), consisting of shawms, long straight natural trumpets, double-headed drum, large and small kettledrums and cymbals (i.e. the exact composition of the pañcai bājā), at the five hours of prayer (Farmer 1929:153-4).

Originally, both the band (ṭabl khāna) and the periodic playing (nauba) were the prerogative of the khalifs of the Abbasid Empire (750-1258), prestigious symbols of their power and splendour, but from the second half of the tenth century, the band and the three- or five-fold nauba were honours which could be conferred on deserving generals, ministers and governors. Over the next two centuries the ṭabl khāna increased in size and magnificence. That of the Shah of Khwarizm Jalal al-Din Mankubarti (d.1231) was reputed to include 'twenty-seven drums of gold encrusted with pearls, the players at its inception being the sons of subject monarchs'. Other nobles had 'great kettledrums of gold which were carried on a chariot' (i.e. Ghiyāth al-Dīn, d.1202), 'five hundred clarions' (Al-'Azīz, d.996), or 'gold-mounted clarions' (Al-Ḥakam II), (Farmer 1929:208).

The ṭabl or naqqara khāna was carried to India by the Turko-Afghan Muslims from Central Asia, who, after two centuries of invasion, finally established the Delhi Sultanate in 1193. An early reference to the band appears in a Maithili thesaurus, the Varṇaratnākara (c.1325) in a section on military expeditions. Instruments listed for the nāobati or nāobatikā are the ḍhāka, ḍhola, tamaki, ni(sa)ṇa and bherī, interpreted by Dick as five types of drum, with the conch (śankha), and shawm (mahuari) (Dick 1984:91). It is interesting to note here the inclusion of the conch in combination with the shawm. Predating the arrival of the naqqara khāna, much evidence suggests that an ensemble of conch and drums was prevalent in South Asia. Five types of instrument comprised the band that assembled on the battlefield of Kurukshetra at the outset of the Mahābhārata was (Bhagavadgita I.13), including conch and kettledrum (bherī). The Jātakas include many references to the conch in combination with various drums. For example, the Mūga-pakkha Jātaka's description of the preparation for a journey by King Kasi, in which a mixed ensemble of conch and drums forms part of the entourage (Cowell 1907: vi/14). The pañcamahāśabda 'five great sounds' of the Jātakas apparently included conch, horn, gong and drums (Strangways 1914:77; (Dick 1984:83).

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In the Śrī Śrī Caṇḍī of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, dating from c.A.D.700,[1] Śakti is glorified as the Mother Goddess who descends to earth as Durgā to rescue the world from demons. Chapter two describes the terrific battle between the demon army and the forces of good led by the Goddess, accompanied by the sounds of thousands of conches and the beat of war drums. The association of the Mother Goddess in her various manifestations with the sound of conches and war drums perhaps accounts for the widespread use of kettledrums, often in combination with other instruments, at her shrines - a glorification and reminder of her conquest over evil.

There has been much scholarly debate concerning the pre-Islamic existence of the shawm in India (Jairazbhoy 1970; 1980; Deva 1975; Flora 1983a; 1983b; Dick 1984). In none of its pre-Islamic usages does the shawm manifest the characteristics shared by the pañcai bājā and naqqara khāna, however. It is possible that the Islamic shawms took over some of the auspicious and martial functions of the conch, the latter being a very limited musical instrument. It is noteworthy that the conch often featured in auspicious ensembles of five types of instrument. Still, today, in many parts of South India, the conch functions in this capacity. In the pañca vādya of Orissa, the conch is included as one of the 'five instruments', the other four being bell (ghaṇṭa), double-headed drum (ḍhol) and a pair of shawms (mohori) (Deva 1975:178). Sambamurti describes the present-day South Indian pañcamahāśabdam as an accolade bestowed by having five musicians marched before the honoured person. The five sounds include those of horn (sriṅga), conch and kettledrum (bherī) (Sambamurti 1969:263). In nagasvaram bands of South India, shawms and conch may appear in combination (Sambamurti 1962:19). Similarly, the pañcavādyam ceremonial ensemble of Kerala which provides temple and festival music, and may also be used to honour individuals, may have a conch added which contributes the sacred sound ūṃ (Pitoëff 1984:III/9).

The temple music ensembles of Central Nepal do not include the conch - it is a ritual object used exclusively by priests. However, frequently it is played simultaneously with, but independently of, the nagārā bānā during daily rituals, the brāhmin playing conch from inside the shrine, and the nagarci playing outside.

1. The Caṇḍī pāṭh is believed to predate the rest of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa by about 200 years.

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Sanchi provides evidence of another pre-Islamic band of mixed wind and drums, from about the time of Christ. The ensemble appears to be foreign - possibly Greek or Scythian, and includes two upwardly blown, slightly curved trumpets with open animal mouths for bells (Tarlekar and Tarlekar 1972; Krishnamurti 1985:63).

From the fourteenth century, the naqqara khāna (or naubat) became established across Northern India, not only as a symbol of power of the Muslim aggressors, the band was also adopted by their Hindu subjects, as attested by an early depiction of the naubat on the fourteenth century Jain temple of Vadi Parcvanathā at Anahilapaṭṭana. Here, a group of four musicians playing large and small trumpets from a balcony is depicted (Marcel-Dubois 1941:162). The function of the band included playing from balconies and terraces of palaces, fortresses and city gates to sound the hours of the day or to announce the arrival of visiting dignitaries. An early iconographic depiction of the shawm in India dates from c.1475, in which the instrument appears in combination with a pair of kettledrums (Flora 1983b:208). There is also a fifteenth century Hindi reference to the naubat in the Dohāvalī of Kabir. The instruments ḍhol (double-headed barrel drum), damāma and bherī (possibly two sizes of kettledrum), siṅg (horn), and śaṅnāī (shawm) are given (Dick 1984:91).

In India, as in Central Asia, the naqqara khāna was a prestigious status symbol reflecting rank and power, and could be conferred by the emperor. Consequently, the ensemble of greatest pomp and magnitude was that which graced the court of the emperor himself. That of Akbar was described by Abu'l Fazl in the Ain-i-Akbari of c.1590 as consisting of:

> about 18 pairs of kuwargah or damāmah (large kettledrums) 'which give a deep sound'
> about 20 pairs of naqqārah (kettledrums)
> 4 duhul (double-headed drums)
> at least 4 karanā (natural trumpets) of gold, silver, brass and other metals
> 9 Persian and Indian surna (shawms)
> some each of Persian, European and Indian nafir (natural trumpets)
> 2 brass sing (natural horns) 'made in the form of a cow's horn'
> 3 pairs of sanj (cymbals)
>
> Abu'l Fazl 1875:211)

The function of Akbar's naqqara khāna is detailed by Abu'l Fazl, and

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included sounding the hours of day and bestowing auspicious blessings on the emperor.

The arrival of the pañcai bājā in Nepal is difficult to date precisely as there are scant sources from which the history of the band can be pieced together satisfactorily.[1] It was carried into Nepal by the court musicians of wealthy Rajput families, fleeing with their patrons from their Muslim aggressors to the mid-hills of Western Nepal. Here, their masters soon established themselves as feudal lords, from the fourteenth century onwards. The earliest evidence of Rajput settlement (and domination) in Nepal is from Jumla - a copper-plate inscription dating from 1395.

There were two main settlement areas, which became known as the Bāīsī, '22 principalities' and the Caubīsī, '24 principalities'. The former, which was the earliest settlement area, was centred on the Karṇāli basin and stretched from the Mahākālī to the Nārāyaṇi Rivers in Far-Western Nepal. The latter lay roughly in the area between the Nārāyani and Triśuli Rivers of Western Nepal (Map 4). Still, today, in terms of the pañcai bājā traditions, the Bāīsī and the Caubīsī can be identified as the two distinct culture areas, the 'Far-Western' and 'Central Nepalese' traditions (Map 1). It is in the region which was the original settlement area of the Śāha dynasty - the Caubīsī - and in the neighbouring districts on the eastern side, Dhāding and Nuwākoṭ, captured by Pṛthvinārāyaṇ Śāha, where a network of temples dedicated to Mother Goddesses and the richest Gorkhali temple music tradition is found, a tradition which oral history traces back to the reign of Rām Śāha (1606-36).
The official genealogies - vaṃśavali - of the Śāha house of Gorkha trace their Rajput ancestry to the Suryabansi dynasty of Chittorgarh (Wright 1877:273). This basic claim is endorsed by historians (Lévi 1905; Regmi 1975; Hasrat 1970). However, the vaṃśavalis' relation of the events leading up to the flight from Chittor are confused and chronologically

1. There are two principal sources of historical information:
(a) Inscriptions. Those of the Licchavi and Śāha dynasties have been collected and interpreted by Bajracaryā (B.S.2030) and Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha (B.S.2037) respectively.
(b) The vaṃśavalis - genealogies of the royal dynasties of Nepal elaborated with legends based on historical fact and religious myth. There are numerous vaṃśavalis which comprise two distinct sets - those written by brāhmins and those of Newar Buddhist priests (vajracaryā). They may

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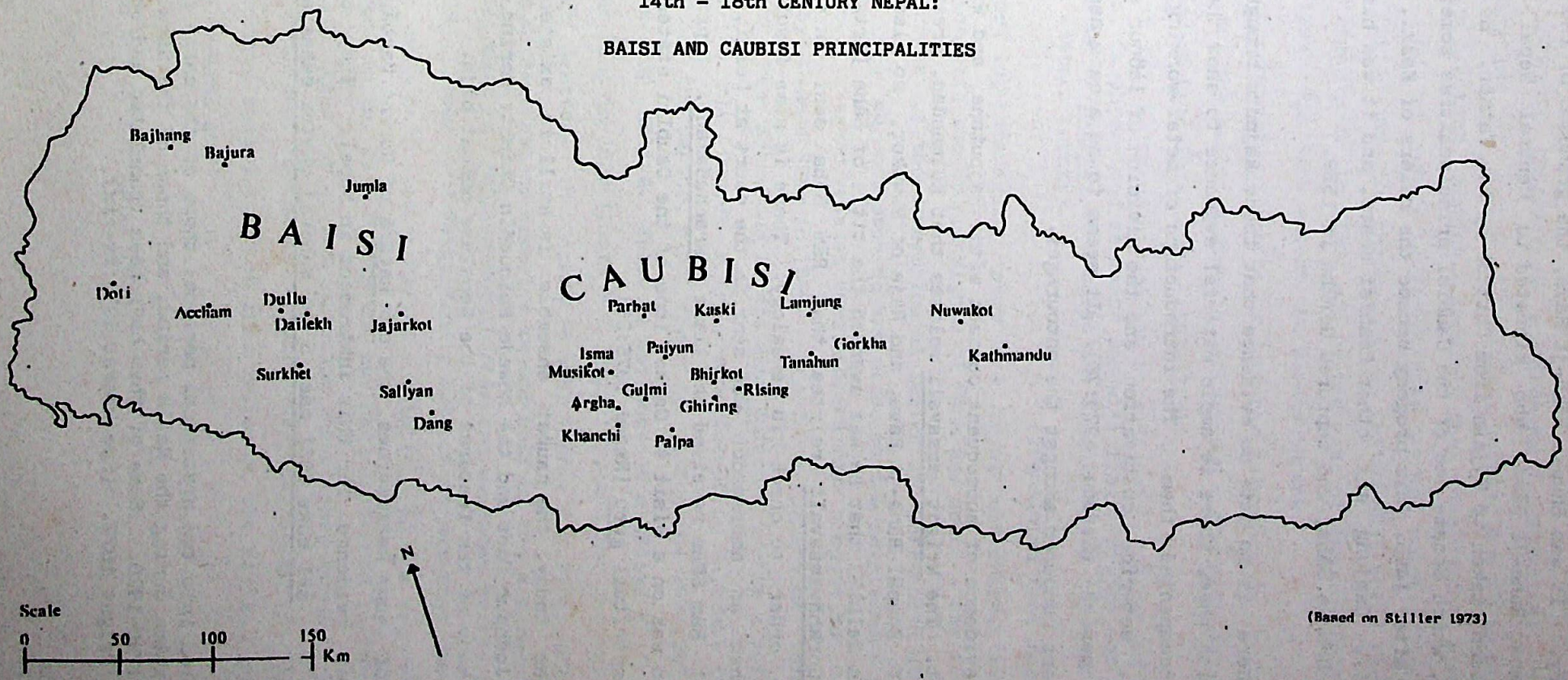
MAP 4

14th - 18th CENTURY NEPAL:

BAISI AND CAUBISI PRINCIPALITIES



(Based on Stiller 1973)

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contradictory. It was Bhupāl Rānā-ji Rāva, the grandson of the Chittor rāja, Audumbar Rānā-ji Rāva, who migrated to Central Nepal, having initially been taken to Ujjain from Chittor by his father. He settled in Bhirkoṭ, which became one of the Caubīsī principalities sometime in, or shortly after 1495. His progeny became the rulers of Kaski, Nuwākoṭ (West Nepal), Lamjuṅg and other Caubīsī seats, and it was his direct descendant, Drabya Śāha, who captured Gorkha in 1559.

Although there is to date no evidence that these Rajputs brought their musicians with them, there is ample material evidence to show that their artisans accompanied them. The introduction of metal-working skills, the plough, wet-rice cultivation and the division of labour all date from this period (Seddon 1979:76). It seems to be a safe assumption that musicians numbered amongst the entourages.

There is evidence of subsequent contact with Rajputana and with the Mughal court. The Wright vaṃsavali relates that Kulmandan, great-grandson (?) of Bhupāl Rānā-ji Rāva, and Rāja of Nuwakoṭ, so pleased the emperor (in Delhi?) that he was awarded the title of Śāha (Wright 1877: 276). The Gorkhāvaṃśavali relates that Rām Śāha sent an envoy to Udaipur in order to check his genealogy. There is some insubstantial evidence that an ambassador was sent to the court at Delhi, with the result that Rām Śāha received the title Cakrachudamani. A priest from Benares who was on a visit to Galkoṭ (one of tne Caubīsī states) became Rām Śāha's spiritual guru (Regmi 1975:36).

In Rajasthan today, the naubat ensemble is still in existence, for example at Jodhpur fort and the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti shrine in Ajmer and shares many of the features of the Nepalese pañcai bājā.

The pair of huge kettledrums, the dam nagārā of Gorkha Darbār provide the earliest evidence for this instrument in Nepal. They bear the inscription śrī śāke 1531 māse 5 śrī mahārāj chatra śāhasya kṛtiḥ -

be classified into two historical periods: those of the early fifteenth century, written during the Malla period, and those of the Śāha dynasty, written c.1790-1820. Some of them have been translated and/or edited, for example Wright 1877. (See Hasrat 1970:xv-xix).

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'provided by King Chatra Śāha in the fifth month (bhadra) of 1531 Śaka Saṃvat (AD1609)' (Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha B.S.2037:1-8). These nagārā were installed at a time of political unrest, and it is probable that they had a military function - possibly they were used to sound the call to arms, or to summon people to hear a royal edict. Still, there is some confusion as to chronology, as Chatra Śāha ruled for only seven months, from 1605 to 1606, and by the year of the installation of the nagārā (1609), Rām Śāha was on the Gorkha throne.

In the Gorkhavaṃśavali there is just one reference to the nagārā, pertaining to the early eighteenth century and concerning Udyot Śāha, the second son of Pṛthvīpati Śāha (1667-1715):

> Udyot Śāha believed himself to be a Rajput. Taking his wife, sons, daughters and servants and with flags (nisān) and the playing of nagārā, he crossed the Gaṇḍaki River and went to the Eastern country.
>
> (Translated from Yogi B.S.2031)

The nagārā is, once again, part of a royal entourage, mentioned in association with the other insignia of rank and power - the flags.

The histories of the veneration of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth at Gorkha are uncertain and do not provide any clues to the involvement of music in the rites. Legend relates that Kālikā was brought to Gorkha from Lamjuṅg by Drabya Śāha in 1559. The first palace on this site was erected by Rām Śāha, and in his 21st Edict, there is a reference to a sacrifice in the Darbār after one performed in Tallokoṭ (the site to the west of the Darbār, along the ridge) (Riccardi 1977:59), which may have been for Kālikā. There is evidence of a Kālikā pūjā carried out by Ḍambar Śāha in 1636 (Panta B.S.2041:113), and for the celebration of the dasaĩ festival in Gorkha in 1681 (Panta B.S.2041:146). Gutschow dates the present palace from the second half of the eighteenth century. He believes that in 1790 the Rāja Darbār was expanded by the addition of the Kālikā Darbār and Raṅga Mahal, but points out that the former may not have been dedicated to Kālikā initially, as she had occupied an attic room in the Rāja Darbār and may have continued to have been worshipped from there for a time (Gutschow unpublished a:2-5). In 1799 the regular worship of Kālikā on aṣṭamī was instituted by Girvāṇayuddha Śāha's mother, according to an inscription on the Kālikā Darbār (Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha 2037:).

1. The eighth day of the lunar cycle.

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Oral history relates that temple music was inaugurated during the reign of Rām Śāha. Certainly, during his reign a number of temples, including the Rāmeśvar Mahādev and Murālighār-Nārāyaṇa temples at Pokharithok, Gorkha, and Manakāmanā were built. Musicians believe that the Darbār pañcai bājā was in use originally at the Mahādev temple, subsequently to be transferred to the Darbār. On several occasions during the year, the pañcai bājā still plays at the Pokharithok temples.

References to named musical instruments in use for ritual duties at temples are scant. Dating from the reign of Narabhupāl Śāha (1716-42) is an expense account detailing the income and expenditure of the state. This document mentions both nagārci and pañcai bājā: two nagarcis received one rupee as saṃkranti expenses and the pañcai bājā was paid 25 paisa (Panta B.S.2043:600-1). Other sources are some Śāha inscriptions dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The nagārā at Salyānkoṭ (Dhāding) bears the date B.S.1860 (A.D.1803) as part of an inscription, which relates that the nagārā, together with a trumpet (turahī) and a plate (thāl), actually were offered to the Goddess Māī some 75 years earlier in 1728, on behalf of Pṛthvinārāyaṇ Śāha, then aged six, by his representative, Dvāre Bisrām Rānā. The inscription dates from the refurbishment of the nagārā by the Dvāre's daughter-in-law (Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha B.S.2037:383-4).

A copper-plate inscription dating from B.S.1869 (A.D.1812) details carefully the obligations of the Salyānkoṭ music guṭhi. The occasions on which the instruments - nagārā and three bānā ('instruments', presumably natural trumpets), should be played, the payments the nagarcis should receive, and the provision for the maintenance of the instruments are all clearly stated (Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha B.S.2037:552-8). An inscription in the Pacali Lakṣmī Devī temple describes the establishment of the guṭhi in B.S.1870 (A.D.1813) by the queens of Rānā Bahādur Śāha. At this shrine, one damāi was employed to play nagārā with seven kusle musicians. The payments to each are detailed, together with the provision for the maintenance of the nagārā (Bajracaryā and Śreṣṭha B.S.2037:567-72).

Evidence for some kind of musical activity at temples dates as far back as the Licchavi period (A.D.300-750). Some Licchavi inscriptions survive, but these do not specify instruments in use, and leave much to conjecture. At Lele, south of Patan, an inscription dating from

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Licchavi Saṃvat 526 (A.D.605) lists the various guṭhis established for the maintenance of the temple. The word bādittragauṣṭikānāmmā (= music-playing guṭhi?) is featured. This may refer to a guṭhi that supported a ritual ensemble at the temple. Lele was a centre of education, however, and some of the other guṭhis were established in support of pedagogical groups. Bajracaryā suggests that the bādittra guṭhi was supporting teachers of music at Lele (Bajracaryā B.S.2030:289). A Licchavi inscription at Upallokoṭ, Gorkha, dating from Iti Saṃvat 122 (A.D.699), includes two obscure references to musical instruments. Only the word bādittra survives, from which we may infer that the inscription refers to musical activity associated with the shrine. Possibly, as at Lele, it concerns a guṭhi institution.

As for the popular pañcai bājā tradition, in the absence of historical documentation, we can only surmise that, as in Afghanistan and India, what began as a court ensemble was popularized subsequently. The subject peoples of the Himalayan foothills adopted it as part of the cultural package of their Rajput overlords, and as the musicians adapted to meet the needs of their new patrons, they reproduced the local folksong repertoires and participated in indigenous rites and festivals.

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3

THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

'Pañcai bājā' ('five instruments') is a generic term for the Nepalese mixed ensemble of shawms, kettledrums, cymbals and natural trumpets and/or horns played by the damāi caste of tailor musicians. The band takes a variety of forms, and rarely has only the five instruments (one each of sahanai (shawm), damāhā (large kettledrum), ṭyāmko (small kettledrum), ḍholaki (double-headed drum) and jhyāli (cymbals), specified by the title. The term 'naumati bājā' ('nine instruments') is sometimes substituted for pañcai bājā in reference to a larger ensemble (also of variable composition), the nine instruments being two sahanai, two damāhā, ṭyāmko, ḍholaki, jhyāli and a minimum of two narsiṅga (natural horns) in the Lamjung-Nuwakot area of Central Nepal, whilst in the districts to the west - i.e. Kaski, Myagdi, Parbat, Baglung - a pair of karnāl (natural trumpets) is a standard component, with the occasional addition of a single narsiṅga.

In Western Nepal (Jumla, Jajarkot, Kalikot), the five components implied by the title 'pañcai bājā' are sahanai, jhyāli, narsiṅga, and right (dāine) and left (bāyẽ) damāhā, and up to thirty-six of the latter may be employed in a single band. A natural trumpet called karnāli bājā is peculiar to the ensembles of this area.

In the temples of Central Nepal (Lamjung-Nuwakot), the basic ritual music ensembles consist of nagārā (large kettledrum), rāsa (sahanai) and karnal, which may be supplemented by a range of other natural trumpets, including kāhal, bijuli bānā (nāg-beli bājā), dhop bānā, bheri and sikhār, or complemented by a complete pañcai bājā, as at

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Gorkha's Kālikā Darbār. To the east and west single nagārā, sometimes with temple bell (ghaṇṭa), function in this capacity.

The musical instruments played by the damāi have auspicious qualities which they lend to the events for which they are played. When used in sacred contexts, in the service of the gods, the instruments assume a degree of spiritual significance and are treated as ritual objects.

Sahanai

The sahanai is a conical-bore double-reed shawm, the melody instrument of the pañcai bājā. The Nepalese sahanai, whilst being related to shawms of Arabic origin (see Chapter 2), is unique in that it has a curved conical bore (Plates 3 & 4). Its nearest relative is, perhaps, the Burmese hnai (or Hnè), rather than the North Indian śahnāī, the Burmese shawm having a loose-hanging bell which creates an angled overall form (Sachs 1917:36-7; Khin Zaw 1940:409), although the angle is in the opposite direction.

The Nepalese sahanai consists of a compound double reed (comprising four leaves), seated on a pirouette (lip disc), and mounted on a conical brass staple which fits into the top of the curved conical wooden body. The instrument ends in a flared metal bell. Beyond this, it is impossible to make any generalizations concerning the organographical features of the instrument, as it is found in such a wide range of forms across the country. The body of the sahanai common in Gorkha district has eight equidistant finger holes and is without a dorsal (thumb) hole. The eighth finger hole is redundant, and on sahanais of other areas this hole may be stopped (Bhojpur[1], Myagdi), or non-existent - those of Parbat, Baglung and Jumla and in use by the kusle of Nuwakot having only seven finger-holes. Equally-spaced finger-holes, although not universal, seem to be the norm. The sahanais of Baglung have holes at progressively wider-spaced intervals from top to bottom of the instrument, typical measurements being:

1. For tuning purposes, one Bhojpur musician had stopped the first hole of his sahanai, fingering holes 2-8.

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Plate 3: The Nepalese sahanai (Gorkha)

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Top of body to first hole: 5.9cm

Holes	1 - 2:	2.4cm
"	2 - 3:	2.8cm
"	3 - 4:	3.0cm
"	4 - 5:	3.3cm
"	5 - 6:	3.3cm
"	6 - 7:	3.2cm

The absence of a dorsal hole in the Gorkha sahanai is not a universal feature, the sahanais of Parbat, Myagdi and Baglung, and those in use by the kusle of Nuwakot all have a dorsal hole.

Even within a single locality, the size of the sahanai varies considerably, and to facilitate playing in ensemble a matched pair is required. In the Gorkha area, the average total length (including bell, staple and reed) is about 45cm, but instruments may be as much as 3cm longer or shorter. The body itself is usually about 31cm, the last 2.5cm of which is inserted into the bell, measuring about 10cm in length. The staple and reed, as a unit, have an average length of 6.5cm, of which approximately 8mm is inserted into the top of the body, Similarly, the bores and the thickness of the walls vary from maker to maker. The internal dimensions of an average sahanai are as follows: for the first 4cm at the proximal end, the bore is cylindrical, and approximately 7mm in diameter. At the start of the conical bore this narrows to 5mm, flaring to 12mm at the middle of the instrument, and reaching 16mm at the distal end. Unlike the stepped bore of other varieties of shawm (e.g. the Turkish zurna described by Picken (1975:486-7)), the bore of the Nepalese sahanai flares gradually. The thickness of the walls is an uneven 6-7mm (Plate 4).

A peculiarity of the Nepalese sahanai is that it is made in two halves. The curved body (agli) is carved from a thick chunk of wood and planed smooth. Several types of wood are currently in use in Gorkha district for sahanai manufacture, the best considered by musicians to be dār (Boehmeria rugulosa), followed by asnā (Terminalia tomentosa), and finally, cuwā (Careya herbacea or Clerodendron serratum (?)). In other areas, different types of wood are used, reflecting the varieties of tree common to the locality. Thus, in the Jumla area, sisau (Dalbergia sissu) is used, in Dhaulagiri sisau, dār, sati-sāl (Dalbergia latifolia) and walnut (Juglans regia) are used, and in the Bhojpur area, khayar

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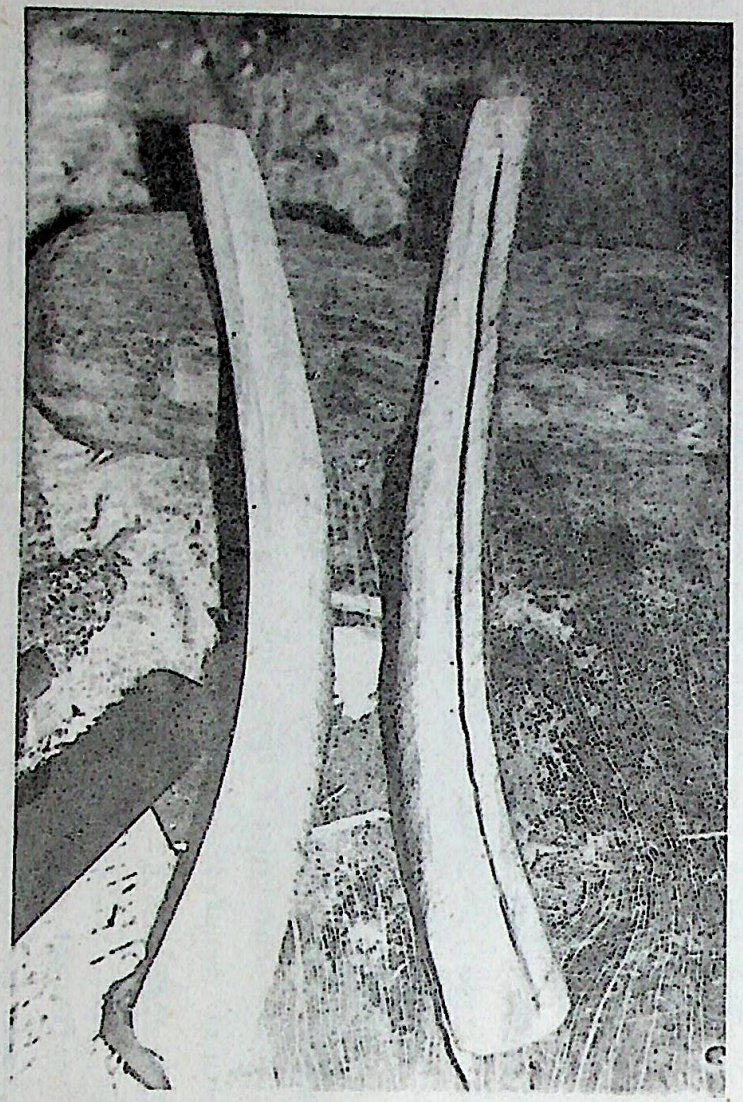

Plate 4: Sahanai construction two halves of the body, showing hollowed-out conical bore

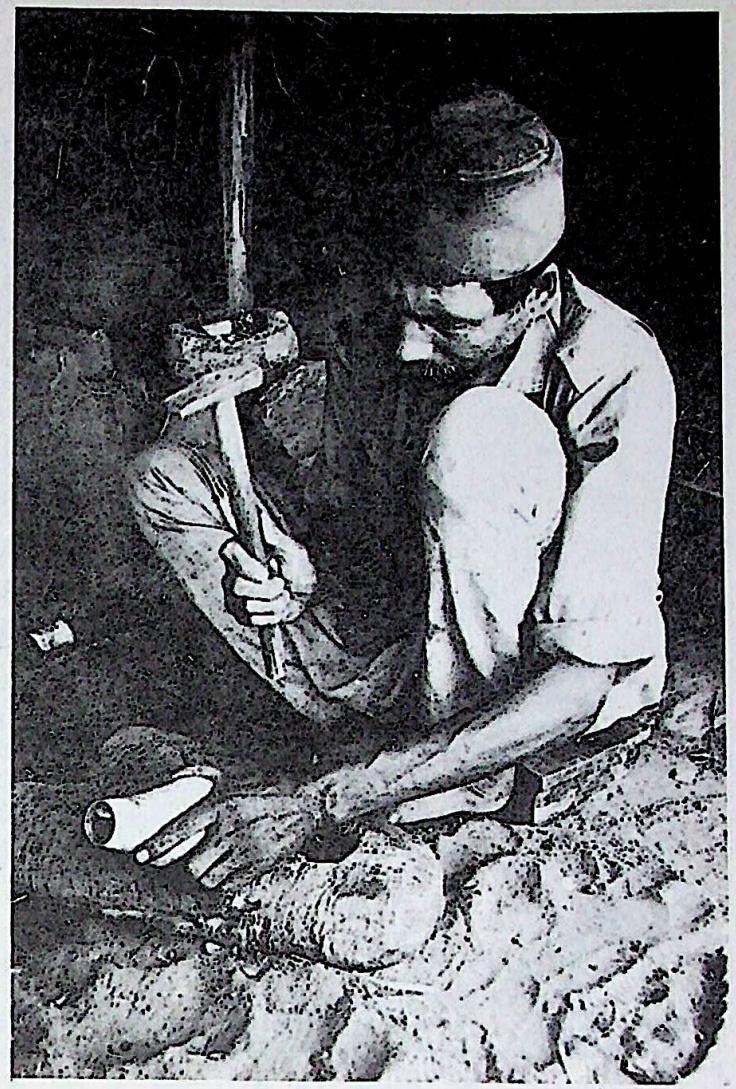

Plate 5: Sahanai construction - forging the bell

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(Acacia catechu) is employed. The solid body is cut lengthways into two equal pieces with the seams running front and back. The bore is marked out with chisel indentations before being chipped away and scraped smooth. The complete bore is not hollowed out in this way; the first 4cm (i.e. the cylindrical section) is left solid at this stage of the manufacturing process. The two halves are rejoined and stuck together with sugar-cane juice that has been heated until thick, black and sticky (ukhuko ras), and are secured by plaited rings (goya) of cane. Once the first and central rings have been fitted, holding the two halves securely together, the holes are measured out in inches. Beginning 2½" (6.3cm) from the top of the body, eight holes at one-inch (2.5cm) intervals are burnt into the wood using a red-hot poker. This is used to burn in through the top of the sahanai to complete the bore. Finally, the other rings are put into place between each of the finger holes, and the body is complete.

Sahanai makers come from within the ranks of the caste itself, with certain damāi being recognized as good makers from whom others will purchase their instruments. The manufacturing process usually takes two to three days, although one maker boasts that he once cut a tree in the morning and played the completed sahanai at a wedding in the evening!

The bell (phuli), staple (nāli), and pirouette (atari) are made by blacksmiths (kāmi), and until recently, they were all made of brass. These days, in the Gorkha area, aluminium has replaced brass for the bell and pirouette because it is cheaper, lighter in weight, and considered to be more attractive than brass as it does not tarnish. In other areas of Nepal this does not appear to have happened, however, sahanais with brass fittings being far the most common. At Nuwakot, the sahanais played by the kusle during festivals have silver rings and bells. The bell is forged by hand from a flat cake of metal, which, having been heated, is beaten over an iron rod into a rough cone. A shaft is beaten into the proximal end, to adjoin the body of the sahanai, and the funnel-shaped bell receives a decorative finish (Plate 5). The staple is fashioned from a small triangular piece of brass which is beaten around a rod into a slender cone, the seam being soldered with gold. Two small brass flanges are slipped over the staple and soldered into place at either end, one to support the pirouette and the other

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to create a seal with the top of the sahanai body.

The circular pirouette (Plate 6) has an average diameter of 5cm, and may be cut from any scrap metal - a discarded tin-can is ideal! Further west, in the Baglung-Parbat area, the pirouettes tend to be much larger, and may be made of wood, coconut shell or metal. Those of Parbat are oblong-shaped and are curved to fit over the mouth completely, measuring 5cm x 3cm to 7cm x 4cm (Plate 7).

A new sahanai needs to be well soaked with water for several days, and overnight with sour milk (dahi), to seal the joints and to mature the tone of the instrument. Before playing, it is always necessary to dampen the wood with water in order to produce a good tone, and to prevent air leaks.

The reed of the Nepalese sahanai has affinities with those of Thailand and Burma. The description of Thai and Burmese reeds by Baines could be applied accurately to the Nepalese type:

> An alternative construction (of the double reed is) found mainly in Burma and Siam. Four or six strips of smoked palm-leaf are superimposed, bent over and cut to shape, and bound over a mandrel inserted between the middle two pieces of leaf. This makes a double reed, each blade of which is composed of two or three thicknesses of palm-leaf, an excellent reed, with which the players obtain a range of two octaves or more.
> (Baines 1957:229)

However, although the end-product is the same, the manufacturing process as outlined by Morton (1976:82-5) is significantly different from that of the Gorkha damāi.

In Nepal, a compound double reed (nāl) is used, made from palm leaf (tār-patra) from the Terai and India. The palm leaf needs to be well soaked to make it soft and pliable, and to facilitate the identification of the two surfaces of the leaf, which is not always easy. The quality of the two surfaces differs, the fibres of the outer wall being more flexible, so that the leaf may be bent across the grain without cracking. Frequently, the outer wall appears glossier and slightly darker in colour than the inner wall. The reed must be constructed in such a way that like surfaces face one another, otherwise the leaves of the reed stick together and fail to produce a sound, and with the outer walls of the palm leaf facing outwards. One musician explained that the reed-

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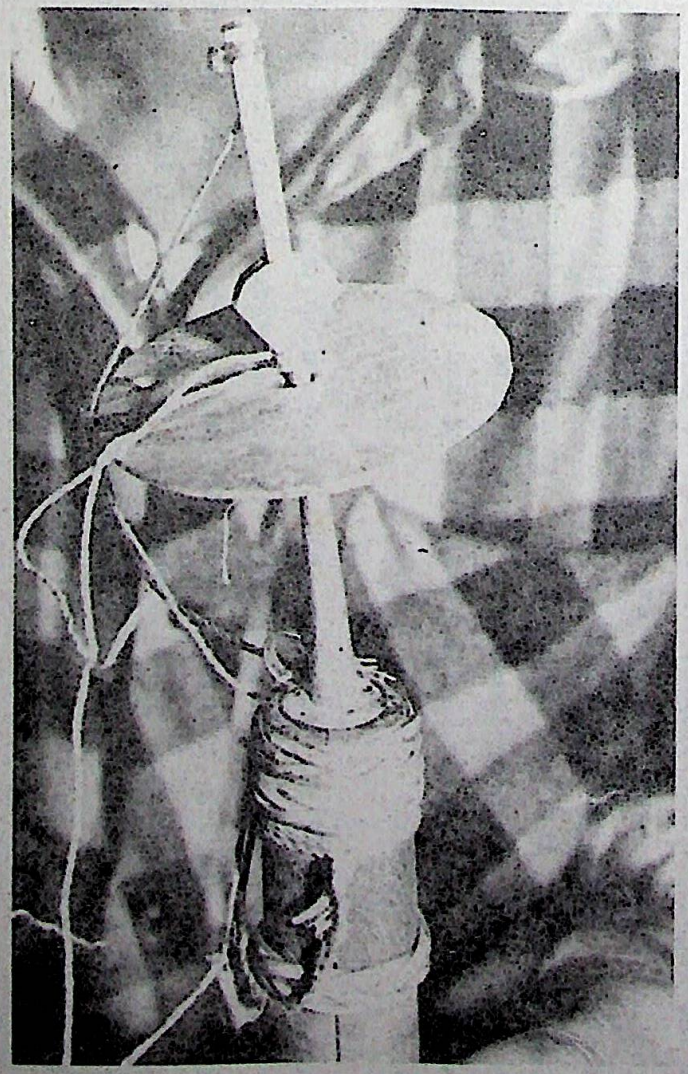

Plate 6: Sahanai reed supported by mandrel, with staple and pirouette

Plate 7: Oblong pirouette (Baglung)

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making process must reflect the natural growth of a plant - when a new leaf forms, its underside shows outwards, and only later, once unfurled, does the more attractive upper surface become visible. Thus, two strips of palm leaf are placed together with the flexible outer walls facing inwards (Fig. 1a), and are folded in half (Fig. 1b). The folded edge is measured against the upper flange of the staple, and the sides and lower corners are cut with a razor blade to match, and to give a rough reed shape (Fig. 1c). The leaves are opened out and secured in the middle with a strand of cotton (Fig. 1d). A wooden mandrel (nālmuri) is inserted between the leaves, two of which are folded outwards to meet the other pair (Figs. 1e & 1f). If the palm leaf was folded inside-out initially (i.e. with the outer walls facing outwards), then the reed could crack across these folds during this part of the process. A knot of quadruple-strength cotton is made by forming two loops (Fig. 1g), and passing one behind the other (Fig. 1h). The combined loops are slipped around the base of the reed and tightened with the aid of the teeth. The reed is placed on the staple and the cotton is fully secured (Fig. 1i). The reed is tested for sound and is then cut to shape and trimmed so that the four leaves are identical. Thus, a reed is produced with the outer wall of the palm leaf forming the innermost and outermost surfaces, and like surfaces facing one another. The mandrel is used to mount the reed upon the staple, and to support and protect the reed when not in use. In Gorkha, a small stick resembling a tooth-pick serves as a mandrel. Peculiar to the Baglung-Parbat-Myagdi region is the use of the small horn of the wild mountain goat, ghoral for this purpose. Spare reeds and mandrels hang loose from the pirouette for the player's convenience. Before playing, a reed must be dampened in the player's mouth to make it functional.

Circular breathing, the technique of continuous simultaneous inhalation and exhalation, facilitating an unbroken stream of sound, is used consistently by players throughout most of the country. However, in the Jumla area of Western Nepal, where the pañcai bājā tradition is essentially a drumming one, the sahanai plays a minor role, and it is played without the use of circular breathing.

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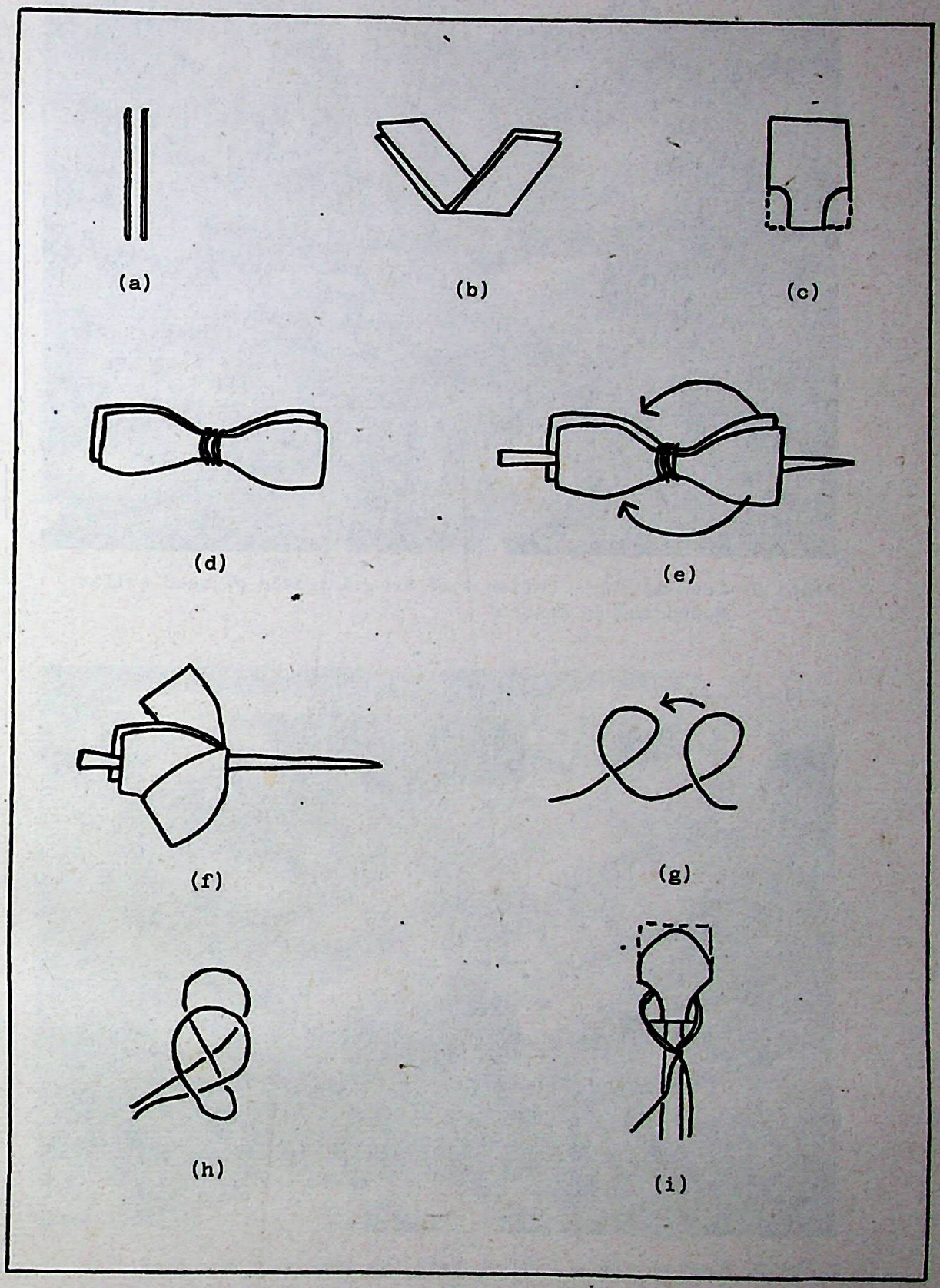
Figure 1: Making the sahanai reed



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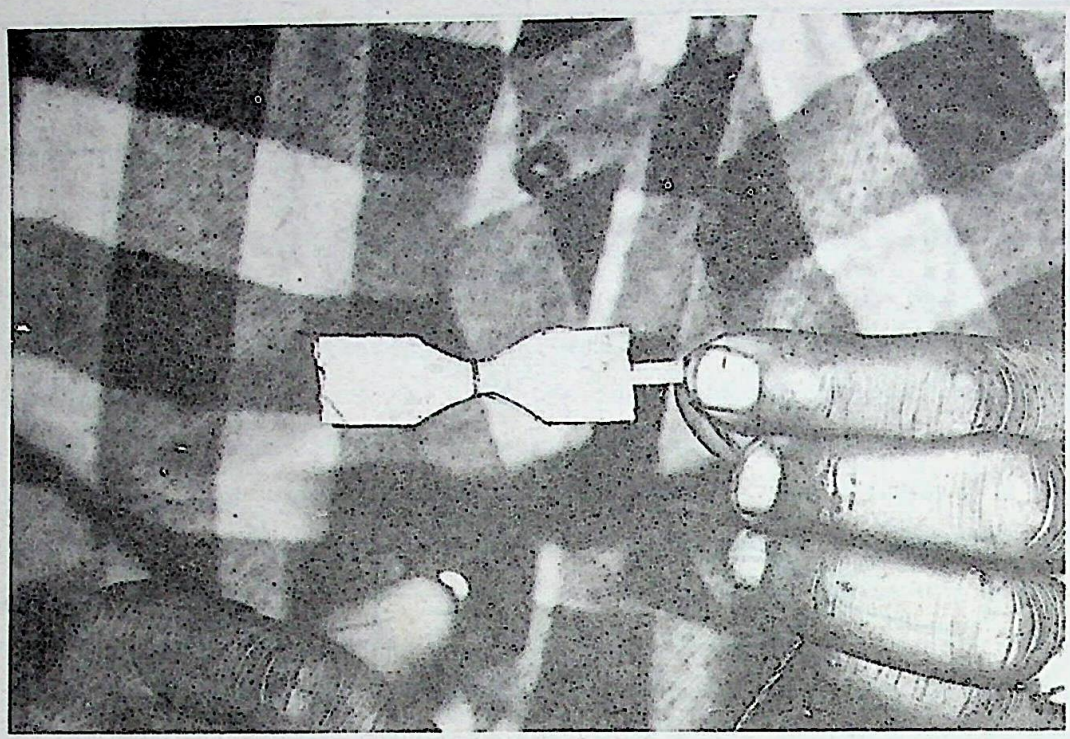

Plate 8: Reed-making - cotton tied around middle of reed whilst supported by mandrel

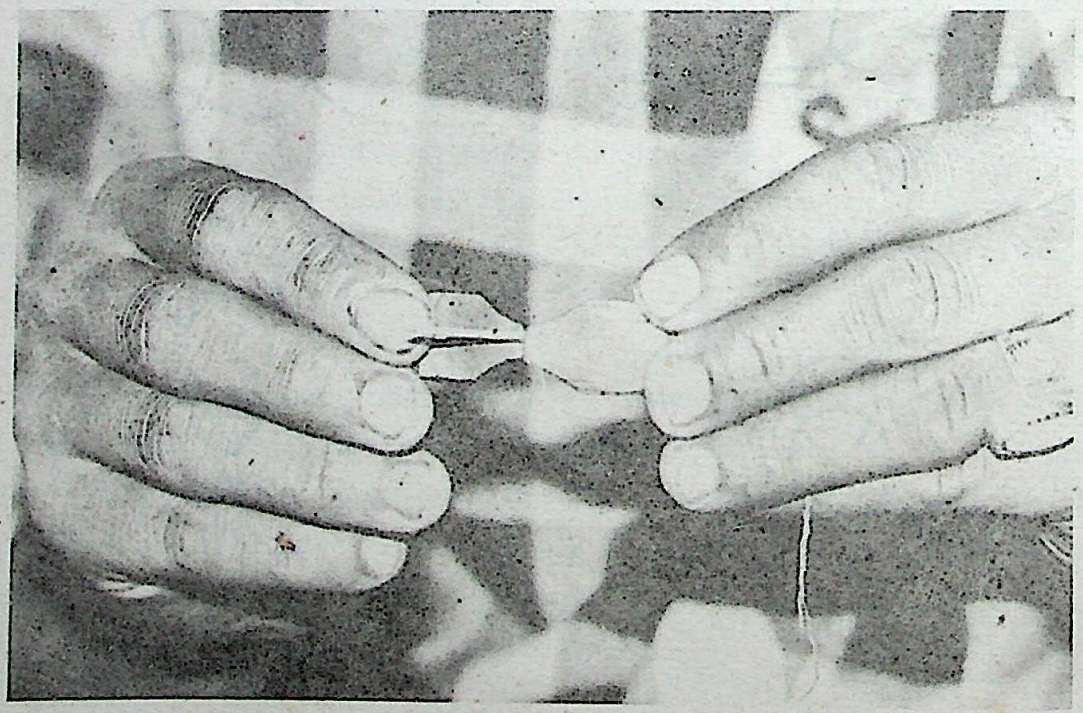

Plate 9: Reed-making - folding back the leaves of the reed over the mandrel

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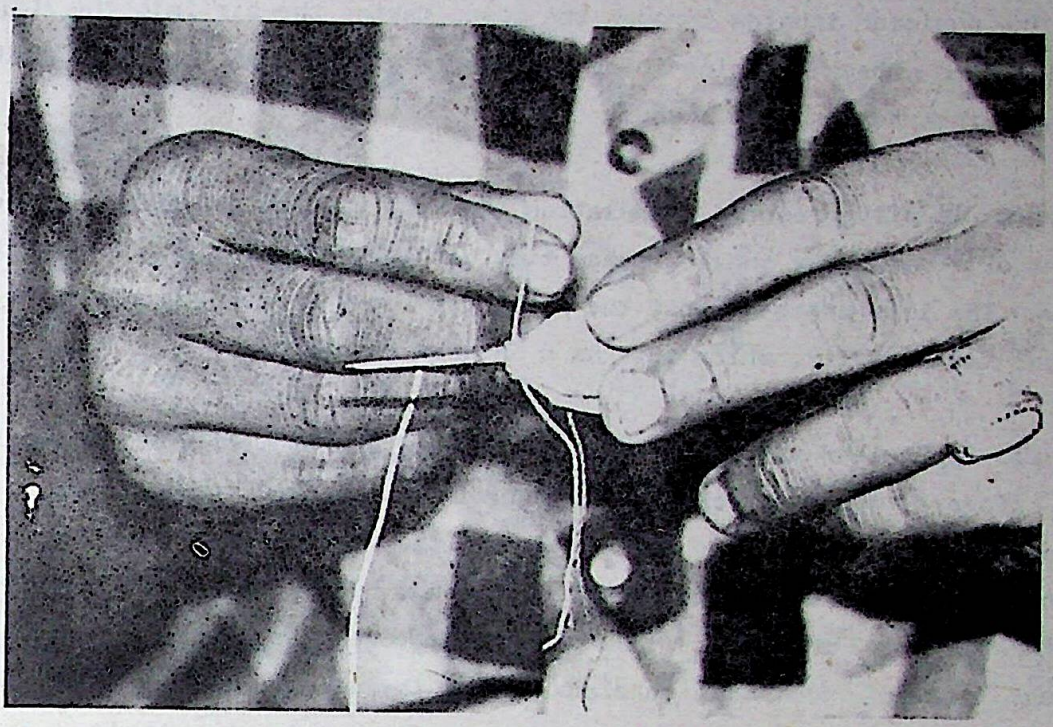

Plate 10: Reed-making - securing the base of the reed with cotton cord

Plate 11: Reed-making - trimming the reed to shape

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2) When the air supply of the lungs is almost exhausted, the last remaining air is taken into the cheeks, which act as reservoirs.

3) The musician inhales through the nose, taking the air into the lungs whilst the cheek muscles force the stored air through the instrument, without interrupting the sound.

Players usually reserve inhalation for the ends of phrases, but when short of breath, may inhale at any time without interrupting the musical flow. The lips press against the pirouette and the reed vibrates freely in the mouth cavity, which acts as a natural resonator.

The players number the finger-holes from top to bottom of the instrument, the fingers of the proximal hand covering the first three holes, and those of the distal, holes four to seven (the eighth hole is redundant). Which hand occupies which position depends upon individual player's preference. The fingers are placed flat over the holes, so that the fleshy pad of the first phalanx covers the hole (unlike Western oboe technique, which demands the tips of the fingers to be used). Some players use the second phalanx of the fingers of the distal hand to close the holes.

The fingering chart overleaf shows the two-register range of the sahanai. Players develop their own systems of fingering, but the one given here is found in common use in the Gorkha area. However, it should not be misconstrued to imply a rigorous systematization. Not only are players and instruments highly individual, but the intonation of the sahanai is so variable that there may be as much as a major third - perfect fourth difference in pitch for any fingered note! Thus, some notes may be 'lipped' rather than 'fingered', and a microtonal gamut is possible.

A large proportion of the current popular repertoire is based upon a tonic (sor) which lies in the middle of the lower register - i.e. produced by closing holes 1 to 4 (Bb on the fingering chart). The acoustic properties of the sahanai suggest a reason for this: much of the popular repertoire is pentatonic, and by having this note as tonic, the melodies lie easily under the fingers and make full use of the lower register. A small section of this repertoire is based on the tonic note C (produced by closing holes 1, 2 and 4). Some of the ritual music is based on the

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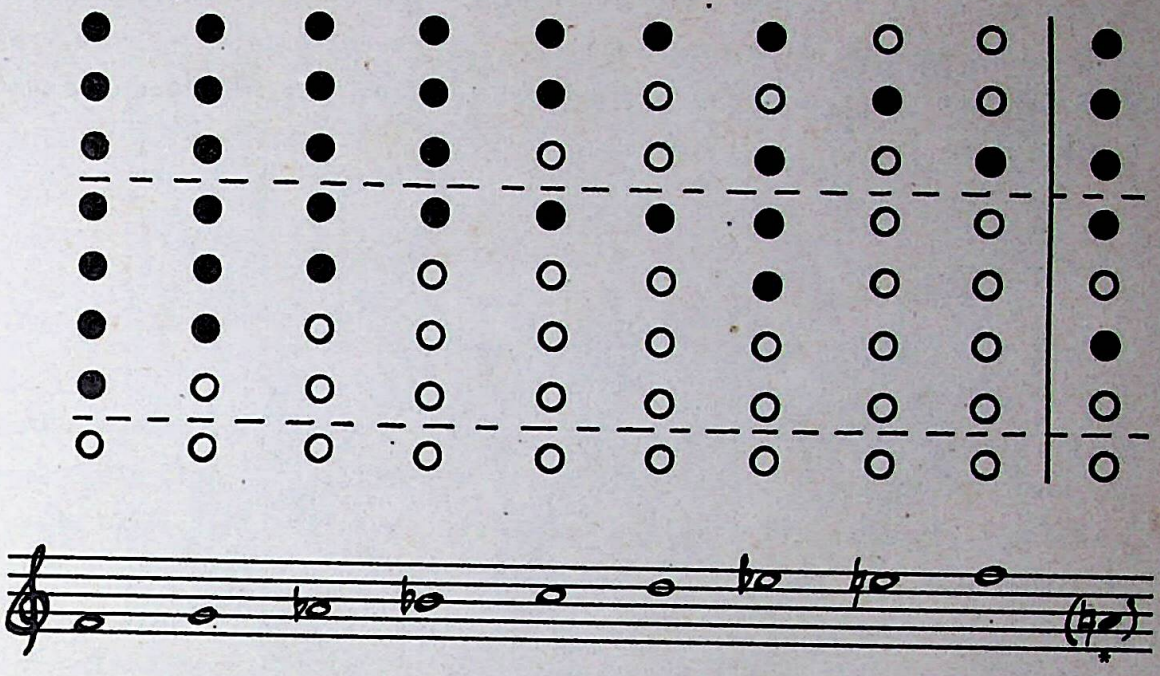
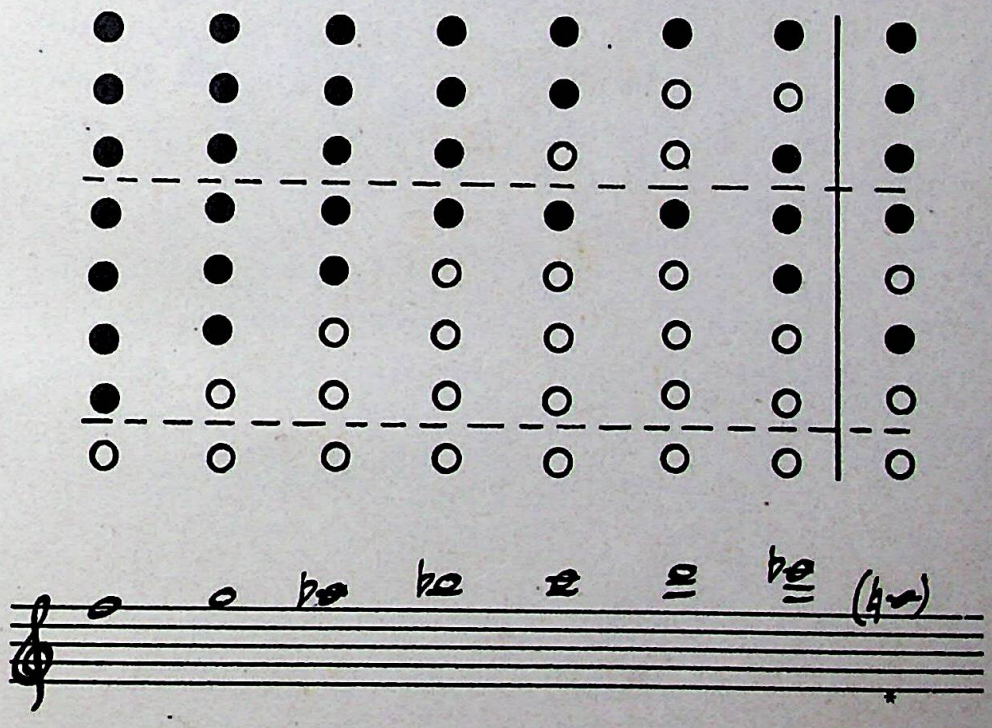
Sahanai (Gorkha): Fingering Chart





* Players would 'lip' these notes rather than cross-finger

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tonic G (holes 1 - 6 closed).

Articulation is achieved not by tonguing, but by breath control, a slight increase in air pressure serving to re-articulate a note. A repeated note may also be articulated by means of ornamentation (see Chapter 5).

Ḍholaki

Ḍholaki, a double-headed barrel drum, provides the rhythmic interest in the music of the Gorkha pañcai bājā. Its two unpitched heads, attached by V-lacing (or occasionally, Y-lacing) over a rim, are unequal in size. (Plates 12-14). The smaller head, or pothi (hen), is played with the hand, whilst the larger, bhāle (cock), is played with a thick stick (gajo). Most players prefer to use the stick in the right hand, but musicians with a stronger left hand reverse the drum, so that the large head is on the left. As with sahanai, there is no standardization of size, but an average-sized ḍholaki, 38.5cm in length, had heads measuring 17.5cm and 19cm in diameter. The largest ḍholakis (eg. 46cm in length) are considered to be inferior because of their low pitch and because their sound is said to deteriorate when played in wet weather (probably due to slackening in the heads). Conversely, if the ḍholaki is too small (eg. 35cm in length), it is too high pitched, and will 'shriek' when played in hot weather.

Whilst the external measurements show ḍholaki to be slightly barrel-shaped, its internal dimensions reveal that it is conical, so that the walls (6-10mm at the heads) must thicken towards the middle of the body as shown in Fig.2:

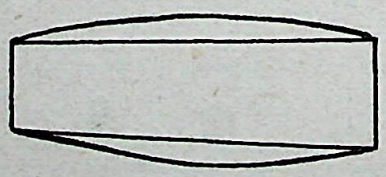

Fig.2

The preferred wood for ḍholaki is chatiwan (Alstonia scholaris), which

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Plate 12: Ḍholaki with V-lacing (Gorkha)

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Plate 13: Ḍholaki with V-lacing (Gorkha)

Plate 14: Ḍholaki with Y-lacing being played without stick (Bhojpur)

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is readily available in the forests around Gorkha. As with sahanai, the type of wood utilized for ḍholaki reflects local availability. In the Bhojpur district, rodingo ( ) is favoured, whilst in the Baglung-Parbat-Myagdi area, boeri (Ehretia Wallishiana and/or Cordia myxa) is used. Having cut an appropriate length from the trunk, the bark is removed and the outside of the ḍholaki is chiselled down to the required circumference (Plate 15). Next, the inside of the ḍholaki is painstakingly chipped away, a task which can take a whole day to complete. Once the ends have been levelled, and the outside has been scraped smooth and painted, the incision of a decorative pattern completes the woodwork (Plate 16).

Meanwhile, the skin for the heads is being prepared. Cow skin is the best hide for a drum the size of ḍholaki, although goat skin may be used. Buffalo hide is too thick. Having been pegged out in the sun for a day to be dried and stretched, the hide is soaked in water overnight to make it soft and pliable, so that the hair can be removed and it can be cut easily. For the lacing (tānā), bullock hide is preferred. Long strips are cut from the hide and cleaned, and four pieces to be used for the rims of the heads are beaten to produce rounded thongs.

The skins for the heads (a single layer for each head) are well-soaked in water immediately before being laced on, to make them pliable, and so that they contract onto the drum as they dry. The larger head is cut from a slightly thicker section of the hide than the smaller one. First, the heads are placed in position and temporary V-lacing is stretched between them, running from holes punctured in the edges, to secure them (Plate 17). A series of incisions is made around the perimeter of the head (Plate 18), and the four rounded thongs (two for each head) are used to create rims around the heads by threading them over one another and through the skins, always being passed beneath the temporary V-lacing to facilitate its subsequent removal. The process begins with either end of two thongs being threaded upwards through the first four holes punctured in the rim of the head. Then each in turn is threaded down through every fourth hole and up through every fifth hole, i.e.:

1st thong: up through hole 1, down through 4, up through 5
2nd " " " " 2, " " 5, " " 6

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Plate 15: Ḍholaki construction - hollowing out the body

Plate 16: Ḍholaki construction - incising a decorative pattern into finished body

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Plate 17: Attaching the heads of ḍholaki - applying temporary V-lacing to secure heads

Plate 18: Attaching the heads of ḍholaki - incising the head prior to threading the rim

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3rd thong: up through hole 3, down through 6, up through 7
4th " : " " " 4, " " 7, " " 8
5th " : " " " 5, " " 8, " " 9

and so on, to create a thick plaited rim (Plate 19).

V- (or Y-) lacing is threaded through each rim and stretched between the heads (Plate 20), and the temporary V-lacing is removed. The heads are trimmed and the lacing tightened several times. With the addition of a carrying strap, the ḍholaki is complete.

Although musicians may make their own ḍholakis, it is more usual for them to be commissioned from the specialist drum makers of the tanning caste (bādi), who make other drums such as mādal and ṭyāmko.

During playing, the ḍholaki is supported by its strap, either from the player's neck or his left shoulder, with the larger head slightly higher than the smaller. The fingers of the left hand need to be relaxed and splayed, and the head is hit just off-centre. The stick is held loosely in the right hand, supported by thumb and index finger, and used for four different types of stroke:

1. A freely-resonating stroke.
2. A resonating stroke which rebounds to produce a double beat.
3. A dampened stroke, produced by keeping the stick against the head after contact.
4. A compound stroke - the hand moves in a circular motion, its downward movement producing a freely-resonating stroke with the stick, and the upward motion of the hand utilizing the middle, ring and little fingers to flick the head as an unstressed beat.

In addition to these four basic types of stroke with the stick, the right hand is also employed directly, the stick being supported by the index finger and thumb, whilst the other three fingers are slightly splayed, like those of the left hand, and strike the head. These strokes are combined in the production of lively idiosyncratic rhythmic patterns (see Chapter 4).

In some areas, other playing techniques are employed in specific items of the local repertoire. For example, in the Baglung-Parbat-Myagdi

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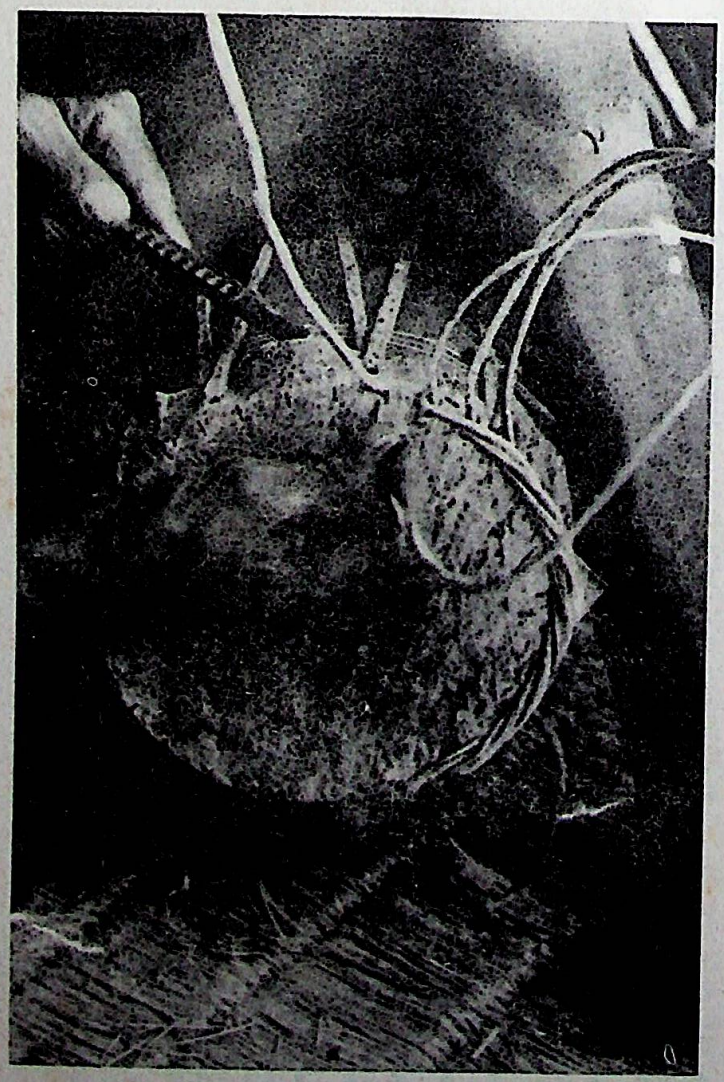

Platc 19: Attaching the heads of ḍholaki - creating the rim by cross-threading thongs

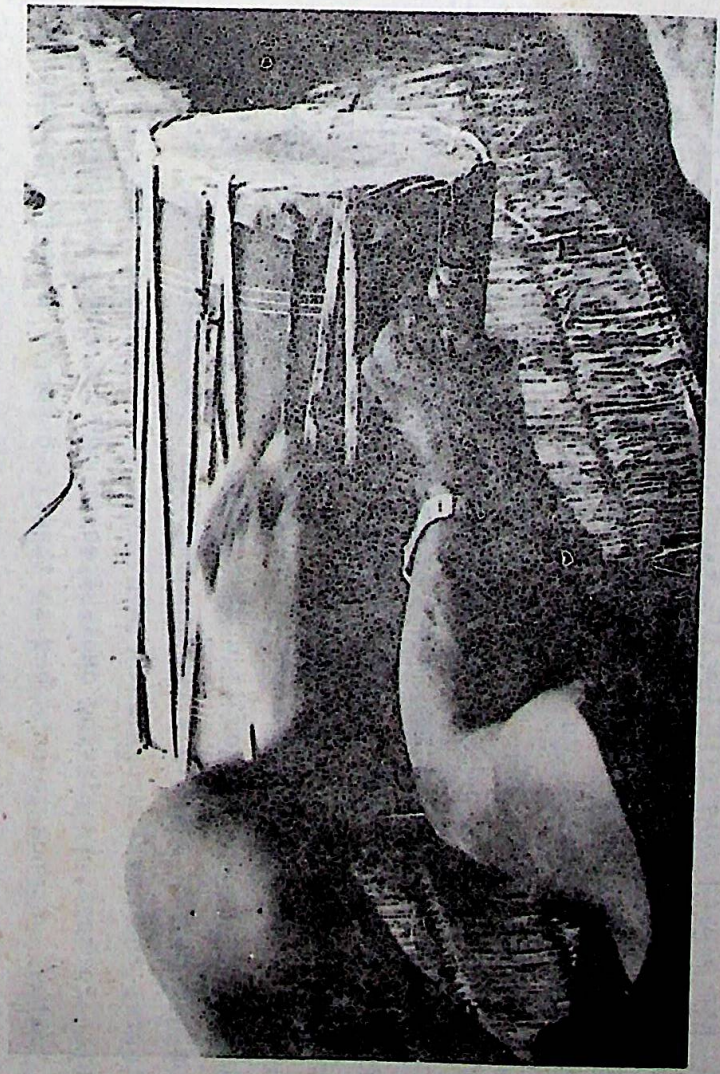

Plate 20: Attaching the heads of ḍholaki - replacing temporary lacing with V-lacing between the new rims

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area, when playing the item of repertoire nagara, during the ritual circumambulation around temples, the ḍholaki is supported by the left hand and played only with the stick, held in the right (i.e. played as a single-headed drum). Similarly, at Jamrung Darbār, Dharding, when playing malaśrī, the ḍholaki player utilizes only the larger head, playing with the stick, in unison with the damāhā. For another item of the Jamrung repertoire - marū - played during the consecration of a sacrificial area, the damāhā and ḍholaki are played by one musician as a pair of kettledrums, with a single stick, the ḍholaki being up-ended and placed on the player's left, with the damāhā on his right.

In these three instances, the ḍholaki is used as a single-headed drum whilst playing a sacred item of repertoire. The distinctive playing technique may be seen to alter the status of the instrument. In sacred contexts, the kettledrum is the most powerful ritual medium of the damāi. Perhaps, by playing ḍholaki as though it were a kettledrum, it its ritual status is enhanced so that it becomes a more effective medium for the music is carries.

Whilst in the Gorkha area, the ḍholaki is indispensible to the pañcai bājā, as the primary source of rhythmic interest, in other areas of Nepal this is not the case. In the Jumla-Kalikot region there is no tradition of ḍholaki playing. In the Bhojpur area, the ḍholaki is subordinate to ṭyāmko and is often absent from ensembles. The art of playing ḍholaki has all but been lost - only a few aged musicians are able to play it in the traditional way. Some other musicians play it as though it were a mādal, without a stick. In place of ḍholaki, ṭyāmko carries a limited amount of rhythmic interest, but on the whole, these eastern bands lack the vitality of those of Central Nepal in which the ḍholaki playing of an experienced musician can be virtuosic as well as interesting, and lightens the texture of the music considerably.

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Damāhā

Damāhā, the instrument which lends its name to the musician caste that plays it, is a large unpitched copper kettledrum (Plate 21), in Central Nepal, played with one thick stick (gajo), although in ritual contexts it is often played as nagārā, with two sticks. In Gorkha, damāhās are usually played in pairs to provide a resonant bass to the ensemble. Even within the Gorkha district, sizes of damāhā vary considerably, the diameter of the heads being within the range 29cm-34cm and the depth of the bowl 28cm-32cm. In East Nepal, where the damāhā tend to be larger (an average sized damāhā head measuring 39.5cm in diameter with a bowl 42.5cm deep), and more resonant, they are played singly. In Far-Western Nepal, where the pañcai bājā is essentially a drumming tradition, orchestras of up to thirty-six damāhā are common. The damāhā are played with two angled sticks (Plate 22), average length 40cm, and are used responsorially, the call (tukuri) being sounded by a single dāine (right) damāhā, to which the chorus of bāyā̃ (left) damāhā responds. Once again, the average size of the Far-Western damāhā is larger than that of the Gorkha instruments. In an ensemble of thirteen damāhā, the sizes ranged from a head diameter of 29.5cm with a depth of bowl 32cm, to a head diameter of 41cm with a bowl 43cm in depth (Plate 23).

Damāhā are made by Newāri coppersmiths (tamrakar) and by the blacksmiths (kāmi) of the hills, and the heads are prepared and laced on by the leather-working castes (bādi, sārki) or by the damāi themselves. A new damāhā requires approximately four kilograms of raw copper, which is melted into a solid cake and forged into shape. It is heated periodically in the furnace, and the inside of the bowl is beaten with heavy hammers by two or three smiths until the required shape has been produced, when the outside is beaten smooth with a small hammer. Not only the shape of the bowl, but the thickness of its walls and the quality of the copper all affect the tone of the instrument. Throughout the forging, the metal is a dull black colour. Finally, it is cleaned by heating it to red-hot and rapidly cooling it by smothering it in sawdust and ashes, and then polishing. A small hole is punctured in the base to facilitate the soaking of the head with water. The manufacture takes three smiths an average of two days to complete (Plate 24).

The head is made from an extremely thick piece of bullock (goru) hide.

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Plate 21: Damāhā (Gorkha)

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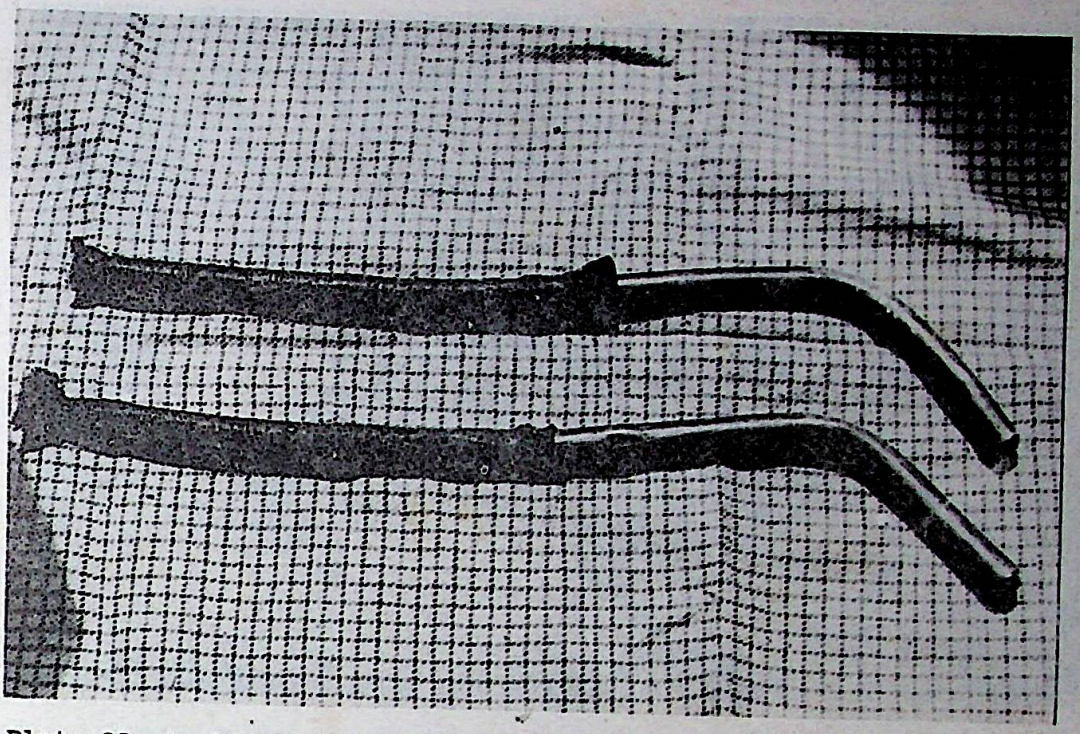

Plate 22: Angled damāhā sticks (Jumla)

Plate 23: Damāhā of Far-Western Nepal played with two sticks (Kalikot)

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Plate 24: Damāhā construction - forging the bowl

Plate 25: Damāhā construction - preparing the head

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The most common forms of lacing for kettledrum heads are straight- and Y-lacing (Plates 26 and 27). The skin must be soaked in water with asuro leaves (Adhatoda vasica) and koirālo (Bauhinia variegata) for two to three days, and periodically kneaded with the feet to soften it. However, if over-tenderized, it will split when being stretched onto the damāhā. During the lacing of the damāhā head, turmeric is rubbed over the skin at intervals, ostensibly to soften the head (it is used in combination with asuro leaves). Hindu lore ascribes mystical qualities to this spice:

> Turmeric... came to be employed in hundreds of Hindu ceremonies... It is believed to have magical properties. A preparation of turmeric is rubbed over the bride's body before her marriage. Turmeric is also chewed and spat around the house to protect the home and occupants, especially infants, from evil influences.
>
> (Walker 1983:II/216)

However, Gorkha damāi did not acknowledge this association.

For the base-ring (nābhi), eight rings of skin are cut with holes through the middle, and these are sandwiched together. They rest on the base of the damāhā, surrounding the water hole, which is plugged with a stick or a piece of hide. 25-30 meters of lacing (tānā) is needed, which, once the hair has been removed, is rubbed with a mixture of turmeric and oil to soften it. The skin for the head is cleaned and rubbed with asuro leaves, turmeric and oil, and the damāhā is inverted onto it. Four thongs are threaded from holes in the rim of the head to the base-ring, in situ on the bowl (Plate 28). Each thong is tightened, and others are added at close intervals, stretching the head into place. Once this first layer of temporary lacing has been secured, a second set is attached between each of the first thongs, but from holes made further into the head, about 8cm from the rim. Two people are required for this work, which demands considerable strength in order to get the skin really tight. The second layer of lacing is tightened, and the first is removed. Three skeins of lacing are plaited together to make a leather thong (māthura) which is threaded beneath the lacing, on the rim of the damāhā, to lift the lacing from the bowl, so that the head can resonate freely (Plate 30). As it is threaded, the lacing is tightened again, and the excess skin is trimmed from the head. Once the shoulder strap has been added, the damāhā is complete.

An excuse pūjā must be performed by the maker as soon as possible after the work is finished. With the exception of kettledrums, the pañcai bājā instruments do not require any rituals during their manufacture, although

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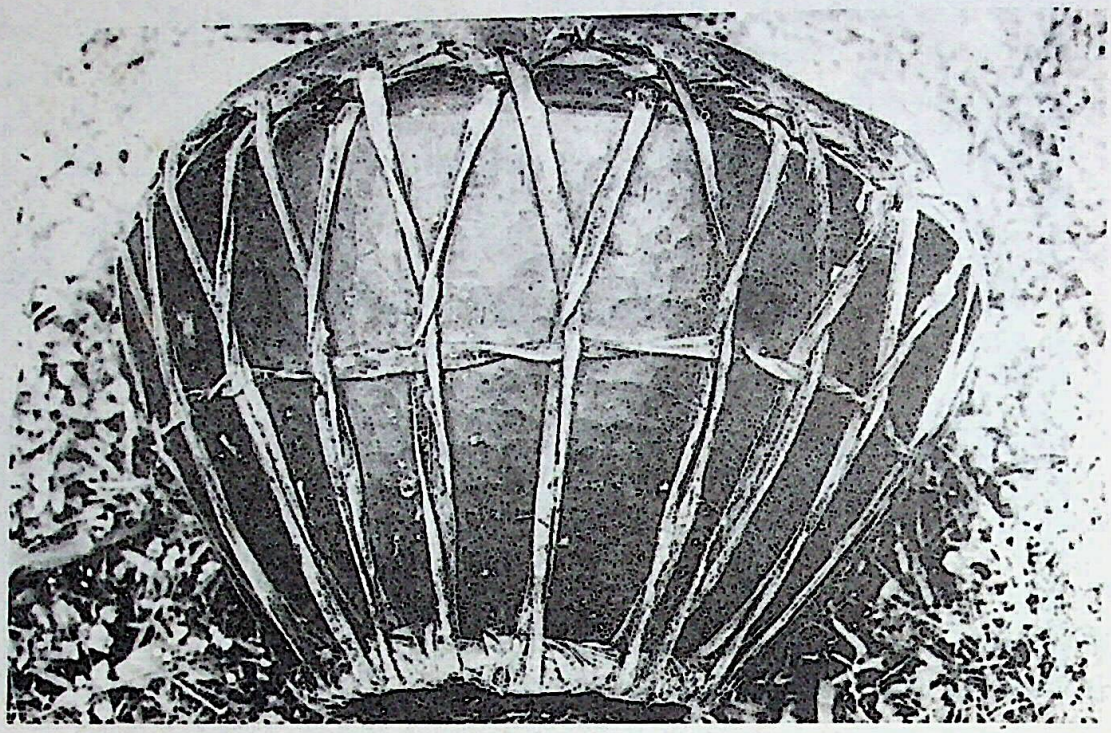

Plate 26: Damaha - Y-lacing

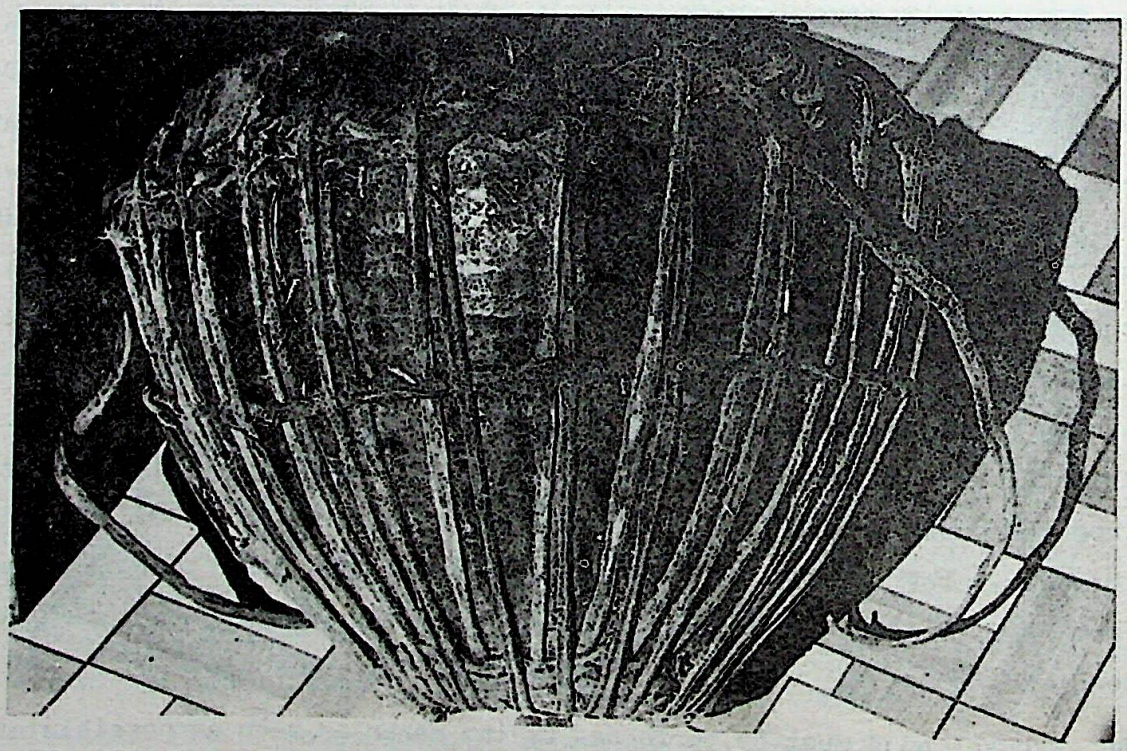

Plate 27: Damaha - straight-lacing

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Plate 28: Attaching the damāhā head - applying temporary lacing to secure head and base-ring

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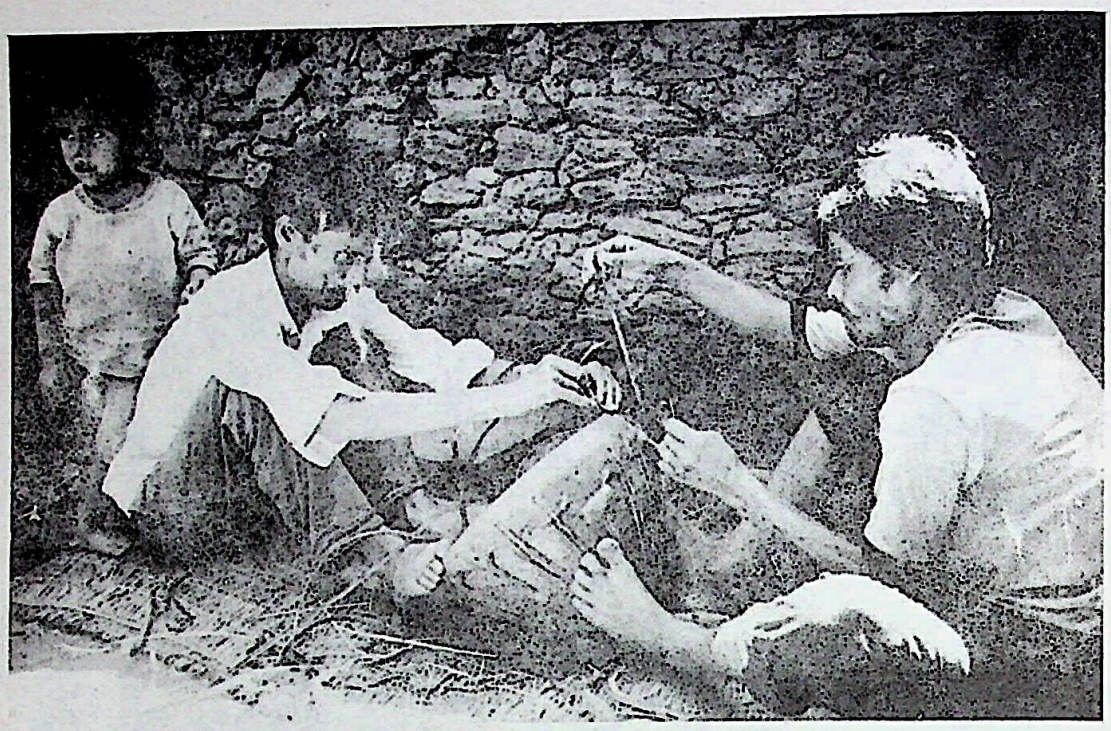

Plate 29: Attaching the damāhā head - applying straight-lacing between head and base-ring

Plate 30: Attaching damāhā head - threading a plaited thong beneath the lacing

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some musicians like to perform a pūjā for a new instrument rather than to wait until the annual instruments' pūjā performed during the dasaĩ festival. The kettledrums are the exception, because when lacing on the heads, the maker's feet support the instrument - an insult to the deity for whom it will be played.

During the lacing of ḍholaki, the maker's feet also support the drum, but an excuse pūjā is not required. One possible explanation is that the kettledrums are made of copper, a sacred metal which is believed to have magical properties, because it has its own inner glow, whilst dholaki is made of wood, without any mystical qualities. Another explanation is purely economic; the damāhā and nagārā enjoy a higher ritual status than that of the other instruments, and for these drums a pūjā is essential. The pūjā requirements, including a chicken, are usually provided by the owner of the instrument as part of the payment for the work, but if not, the individual responsible for the lacing must supply them. In the case of the less ritually significant ḍholaki, the owner or maker abstains from the expense of a pūjā. The same situation is reported in the case of a Newār drum-maker (kulu) in Bhaktapur, who only performs an excuse (chemā) pūjā for the most sacred instrument he repairs, the dyaḥkhĩ of the Navadurgā. Until about ten years ago, a sacrificial chicken was supplied by the Navadurgā, who also feasted him. Nowadays, the drum-maker has to supply his own pūjā requirements (Wegner 1988:50).

Before his feet first come into contact with the damāhā, the leather-worker shows obeisance to it by touching it and then his forehead three times with his right hand, and as soon as possible after the lacing has been accomplished, he performs the pūjā of absolution. In the pūjā performed on behalf of the author's damāhā, Gaṇeś (represented by a cucumber) and Kālikā (kalaś) were propitiated. It followed the instruments' pūjā of Mahānavamī[1], described below, but in a much simpler form. On this occasion, the pūjā for the damāhā was combined with that for the new instruments (a complete pañcai bājā set). The instruments were laid out on a banana leaf, with Gaṇeś, Kālikā and the sacrificial knife, and the offerings before them. The damāi who had just laced on the damāhā head officiated, commencing the pūjā by sprinkling water over everything assembled. The instruments, Gaṇeś, Kālikā and knife were propitiated with offerings of red powder (abir), rice (achetā), flowers, fruit and money; and the burning of incense and wick lamps. The same offerings were then made to the cock (bhāle), whose propitiation was concluded with

1. The ninth day of the dasaĩ lunar fortnight.

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the sprinkling of spirit over it until it shook violently. It was sacrificed in front of the instruments, the head being offered to the damāhā, and the fresh blood sprinkled over the damāhā and other instruments. The instruments must be played after the pūjā, and as the event took place immediately before the dasaĩ festival, the rāg malaśrī was played, being appropriate to the season. The god-blessed offerings (prasād) were distributed to all assembled, and everyone partook of the customary feast.

Before and during playing, the head of the damāhā must be well-soaked with water, which is applied both externally and internally, through the small hole in the base. The kettledrum is supported on the left hip by a shoulder strap, and usually is tilted slightly forward, away from the body during playing. It is hit in the centre of the head with a thick stick held in the right hand. When played as nagārā (with two sticks), the instrument rests on the stomach or pelvis, and is supported from the neck.

Apart from its standard usage, the damāhā is also employed in other ways peculiar to individual items of the repertoire or particular localities. At shrines, it may be played as nagārā, with two sticks, the jor damāhā of Gorkha Darbār being one example. At Nuwakot, a pair of damāhā played by a single musician with one or two sticks, is sounded in combination with kusle and kāsai bājā during the annual Bhairavi chariot procession (Plate 31). At Jamrung Darbār, Dharding, a similar arrangement is found for the playing of marū during the preparation of a sacrificial area during dasaĩ, except that an up-ended ḍholaki furnishes the second head.

Ṭyāmko

In the Gorkha area, the small unpitched kettledrum, ṭyāmko, is made of wood, except for those used in the temple ensembles which are of copper. The preferred types of wood are khamāri (Gmelina arborea), chatiwan (Alstonia scholaris), cuwā (Careya herbacea (?) or Clerodendron serratum) and tuni (Cedrela toona). Ṭyāmko of the Bhojpur area are made of iron, those of the N.W. Pokhara area are of copper, and those of the kusle of Bhaktapur are earthenware. The ṭyāmko is not in use in Far-West Nepal.

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Plate 31: Jor damaha (Nuwakot Bhairavi temple)

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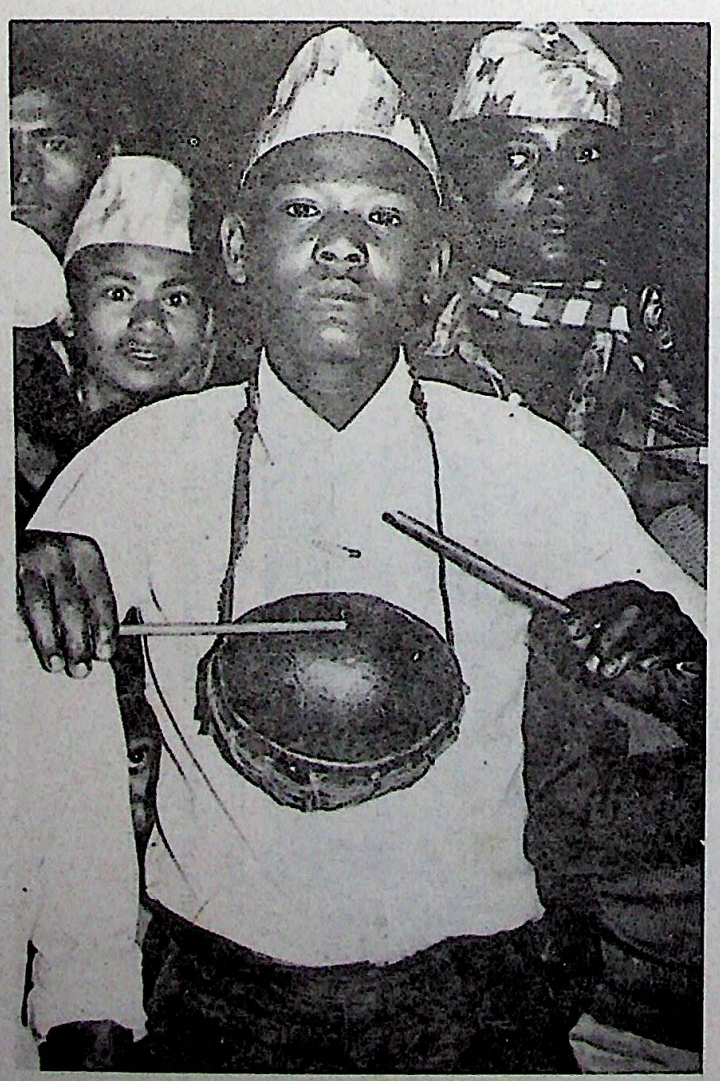

Plate 32: Ṭyāmko (Gorkha)

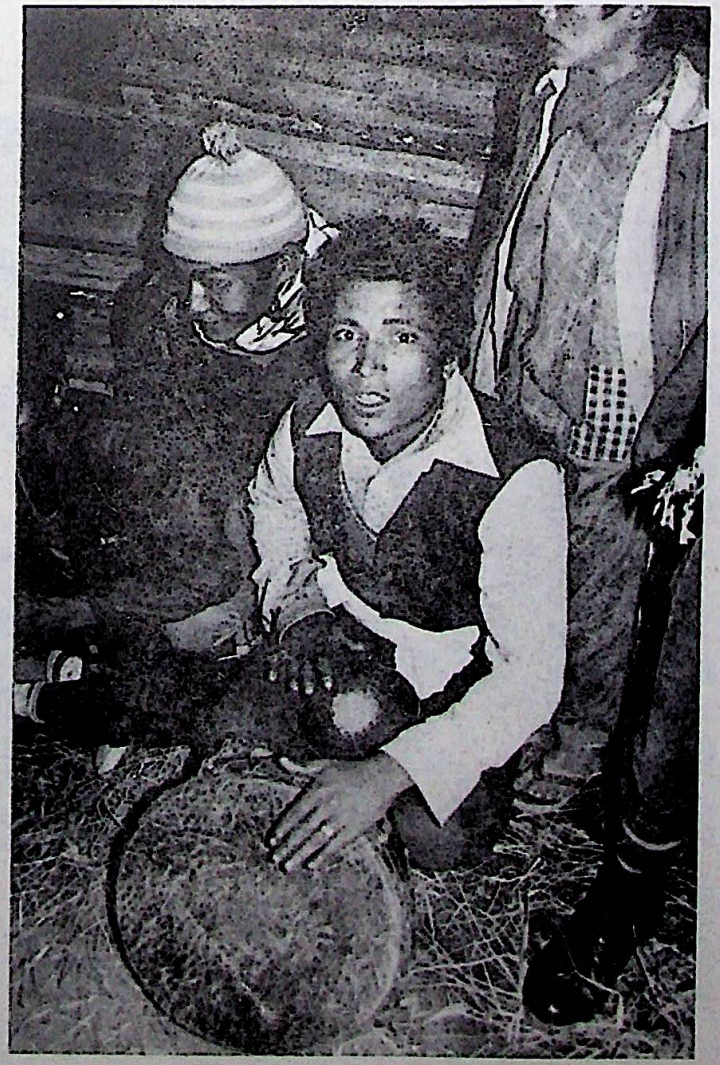

Plate 33: Ṭyāmko and damāhā being played in combination (Bhojpur)

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As with the other instruments, there is no standard size for ṭyāmko, with the diameter of the head anything from 14cm to 23cm, and the depth of the bowl from 17cm to 23cm. Similarly, the shape of the bowl varies considerably. Wooden ṭyāmko are made by the bādi or damāi and those of copper by the Newāri coppersmiths or Nepali blacksmiths. The heads are attached in the same ways as those of the damāhā, and after fitting, a new head is rubbed with a mixture of sour milk and turmeric to keep it pliable.

The ṭyāmko is played with two thin sticks, whilst resting on the player's chest or stomach, supported by a strap from the neck (Plate 32). Gorkha damāi refer to it as the '<u>jetho</u>' (oldest brother) of the ensemble, and in eastern districts, it is known as the '<u>guru</u>' (leader) (Helffer 1969:10). In their myths of origin, the damāi acknowledge the ṭyāmko as the primordial instrument of the ensemble (see Chapter 4). Today, in the Gorkha area, the ṭyāmko has become the least significant member of the band, and is often dispensed with, as its sound tends to be obscured by that of ḍholaki. In the Bhojpur area, however, the ṭyāmko takes precedence over the ḍholaki, both in the pañcai bājā and other contexts. For example, whilst passing the time at weddings, the musicians tend not to play pañcai bājā for their own enjoyment, as they do further west, but instead, play the damāhā and ṭyāmko in combination with both hands, as though they are a mādal, to accompany their singing (Plate 33).

<u>Jhyāli</u>

Jhyāli, also known as <u>jhyāmta</u>, are thin-walled plate-shaped cymbals, typical dimensions[1] being 23cm in diameter, with a central boss rising 3.5cm from the rim, which is 5.3cm wide. The walls are approximately 1.5mm thick. Jhyāli are made by Newāri coppersmiths in Āsan (Kathmandu) and Patan, either of brass, or an alloy of the five metals brass, copper, silver, zinc and gold (<u>pañca dhātu</u>).

To produce a clear ringing sound, the jhyāli are not clashed directly, but with a stroking motion that allows the two surfaces to remain in contact for the maximum time (Plate 34).

1. As with all the pañcai bājā instruments, sizes vary.

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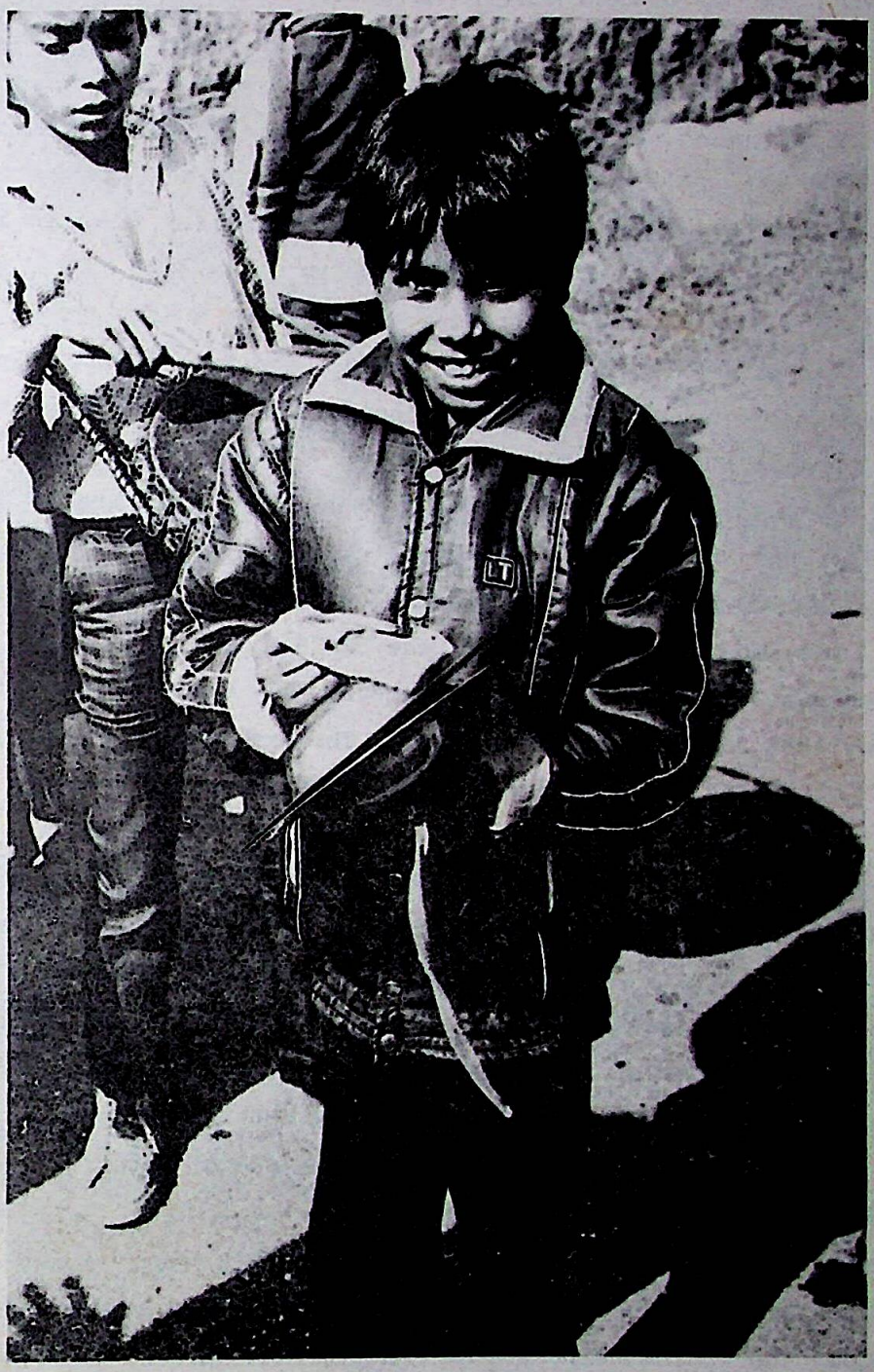

Plate 34: Jhyāli (Gorkha)

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Narsiṅga

The narsiṅga is a conical bore natural horn with integral mouthpiece, made of finely beaten copper. Various regions of Nepal favour different sizes of narsiṅga, and main types may be distinguished according to the geographical locations in which they occur. Central Nepalese pañcai bājā are characterized by a long and slender variety of narsiṅga (Plates 35 and 37). East of the Kathmandu Valley a short fat narsiṅga is used (Plate 39). In West Nepal, the smallest and least curved type of narsiṅga is found, that of N.W. Pokhara functions as a dispensible auxiliary to the pairs of karnāl popularly used, and in Far-West Nepal, a single narsiṅga may make an occasional contribution to the thick texture of massed damāhās (Plate 40).

The narsiṅga of Central Nepal has an average length of 205cm, with a relatively narrow-gauged bore, flaring evenly from a circumference of 4.8cm at the mouthpiece to 10cm at the central joint and 26.7cm at the bell. Musicians in the Gorkha area maintain that the narsiṅgas of today are smaller than those previously in use. The examination of two antique narsiṅgas supported this suggestion. One instrument, reputed to be approximately thirty years old, had an overall length of 208cm and a bore with an external circumference of 5.4cm, 14cm and 26.5cm at mouthpiece, central joint and bell respectively (Plate 38). Of the other narsiṅga, approximately seventy years old, only the bottom half survives, but with the extant section measuring 97cm in length, with a bore flaring from a circumference of 16cm at the central joint to 37cm at the bell, one can surmise that this would have been a greater giant. The degree of curvature has also increased - the gentle crescent-shape of thirty years ago has become a fully-rounded C-shape today.

By contrast, the narsiṅga of the eastern districts has a chunky appearance, having an average overall length of 145cm, and a bore which flares widely from the 5.3cm circumference at the mouthpiece, to 17cm at the central joint, reaching a circumference of 46cm at the bell. The narsiṅga of the West is relatively short, average length 113cm, and is characterized by having a slight angle of curvature. The gradation of the conical bore is similar to that of the eastern type, however, flaring from a circumference of 5.5cm at the mouthpiece to 16.5cm at the central joint, and 44cm at the bell.

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Plate 35: Narsiṅga (Gorkha)

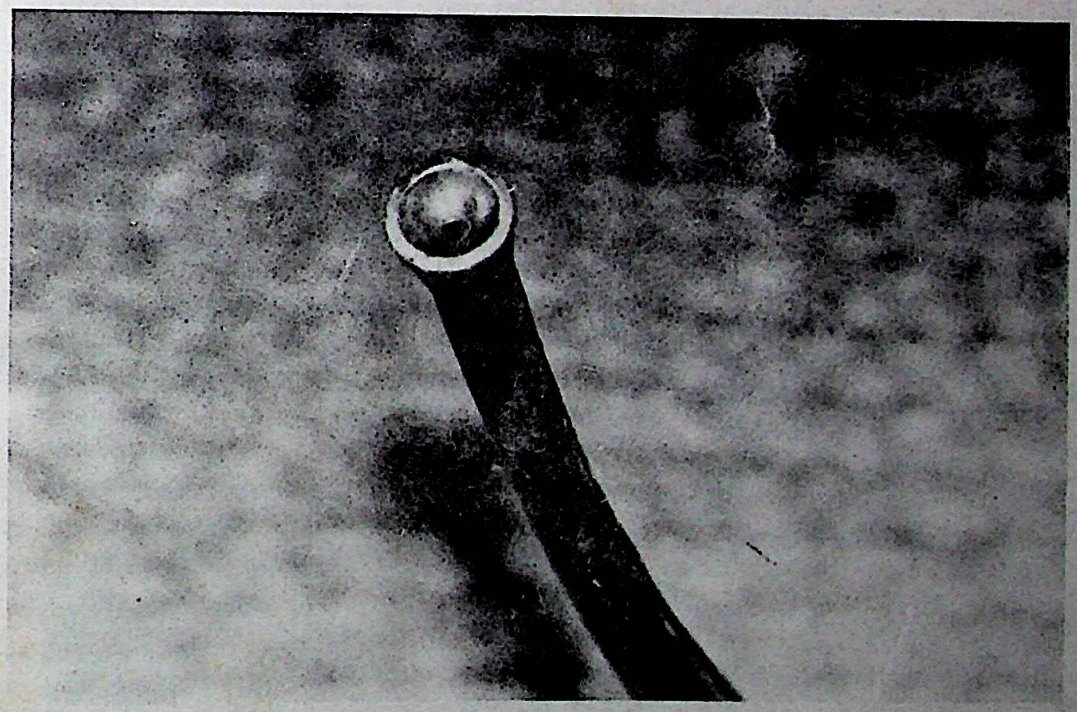

Plate 36: Narsiṅga mouthpiece (Gorkha)

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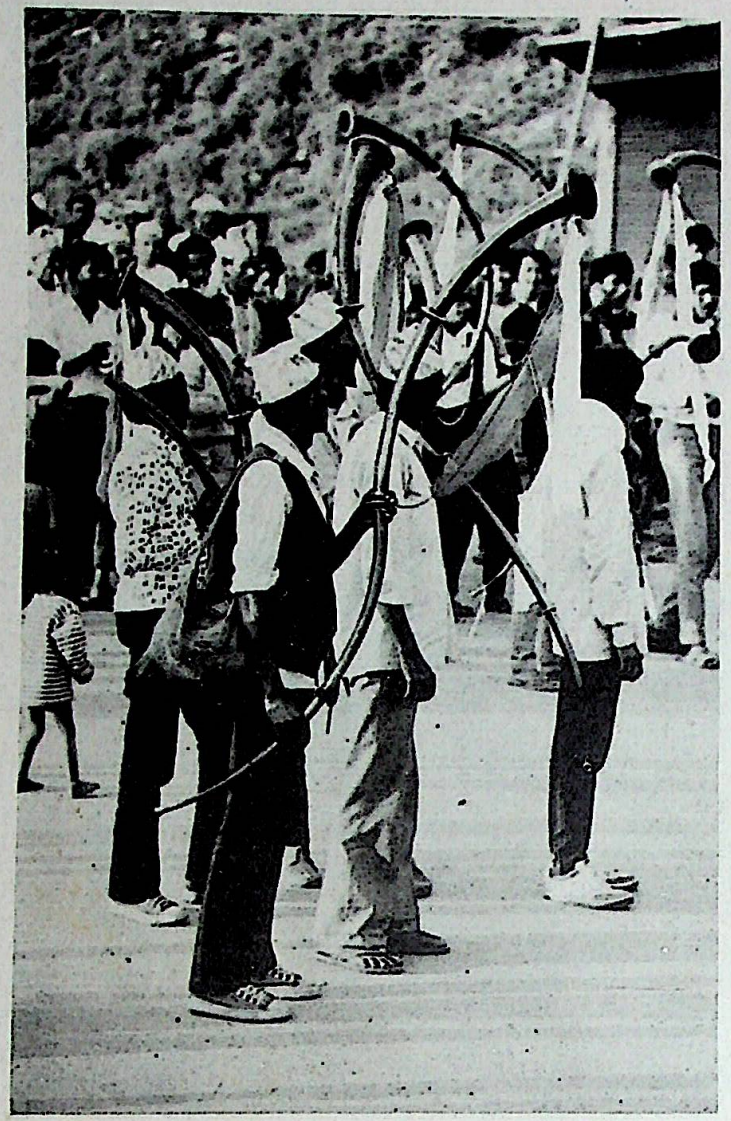

Plate 37: S-shaped narsiṅga (Gorkha)

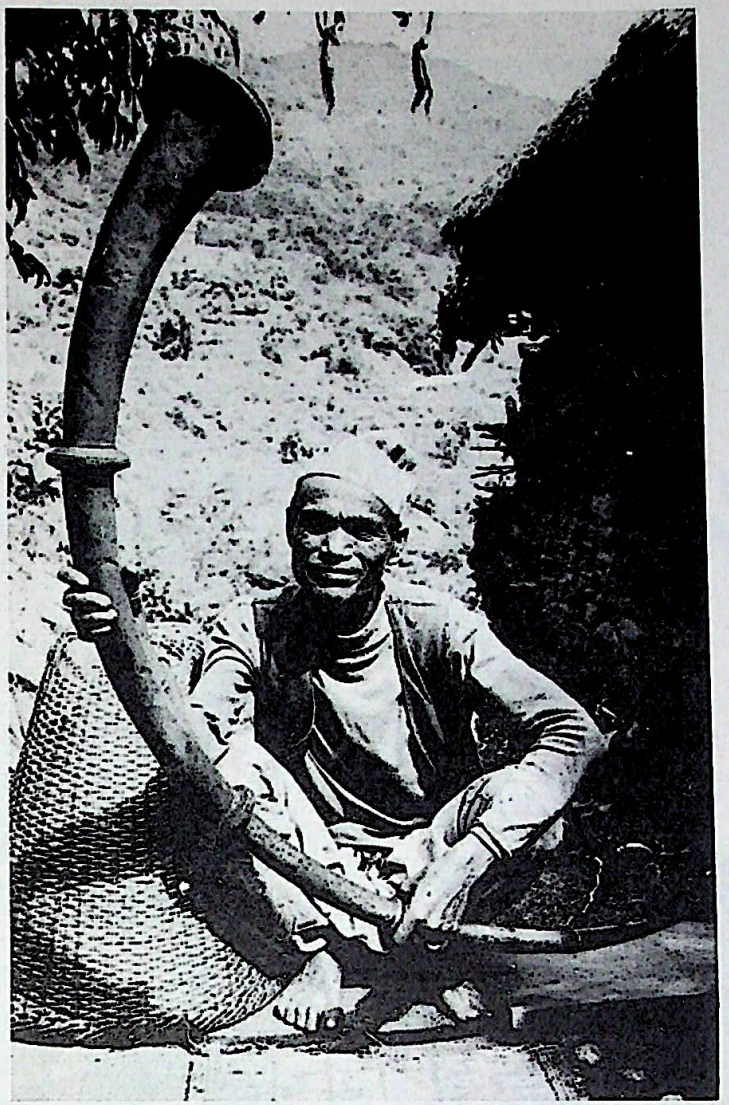

Plate 38: Antique narsiṅga, approximately 30 years old (Gorkha)

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Plate 39: Eastern narsiṅga (Bhojpur)

Plate 40: Western narsiṅga (Kalikot)

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Both Eastern and Central Nepalese varieties of narsiṅga are made by the Newāri coppersmiths of Āsan (Kathmandu) and Patan, but the former are also made locally by coppersmiths of Newār market towns such as Chainpur, Sankhuwasabha district. The Western narsiṅgas are locally made by Nepali blacksmiths and tend to be less-finely crafted than those of the coppersmiths. Narsiṅgas are made in four sections which may be telescoped together for storage and transportation. Players often have the anterior and distal joints fixed (so that it collapses to half-size only), to prevent this rather unwieldly instrument from coming apart during processional playing. There are two methods of putting the instrument together: traditionally, the sections are joined to produce a C-shaped horn (Plate 35), but a modern trend is to reverse the distal end to produce an S-shape (Plate 37).

The mouthpiece is an integral part of the instrument, and is constructed from two layers of copper. Beneath the outer casing, which supports the small cup, there is an inner cone (swiru) which tapers to a tiny hole to coincide with the hole of the mouthpiece, as shown in Fig. 3:

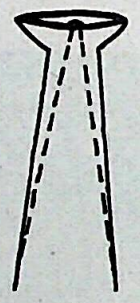

Fig. 3

The mouthpiece itself is cup-shaped (Plate 36), that of the Central Nepalese narsiṅga measuring 17mm in diameter (23mm including rim), whilst that of the eastern narsiṅga is slightly larger, i.e. 19mm in diameter (24mm including rim).

The Central Nepalese instrument is tuned to an approximate Eb, although some examples have been found to be as much as a semitone higher. Thus, the following notes of the harmonic series are available:

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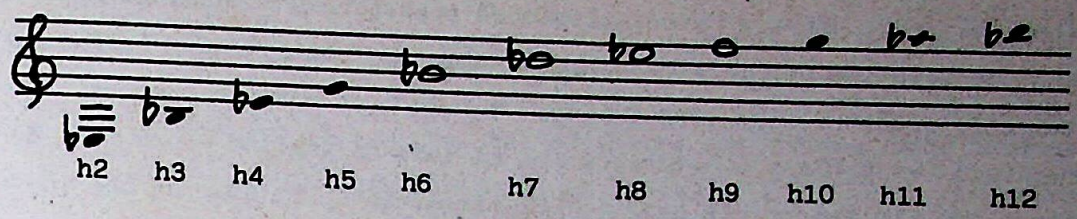
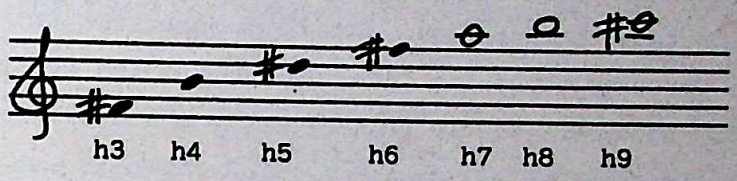


The open fundamental is virtually unplayable because its frequency (c.57c.p.s.) is too slow for the lips to produce on the small size mouthpiece. The various fanfare-type figures inserted into the musical texture of the pañcai bājā normally utilize only harmonics h6-h9, these being the most easily sounded, although h2-h12 are available. The range of the eastern narsiṅga is more limited, and the tessitura higher than that of the Central Nepalese instrument, players utilizing harmonics h7-h9, which sound well above the treble stave:



The instruments are decoratively finished with brass pommels at the joints. These pommels are hollow, and a peculiarity of the eastern narsiṅga is that the distal pommel contains small grains or stones, said by musicians to improve the tone. Central Nepalese narsiṅga, and those of Eastern Nepal that originate from the Kathmandu Valley, are painted with traditional symmetrical designs in red, yellow and green, and have the name Śrī Rām on the bell. Musicians stated that it was auspicious to have this deity's name on the instrument, but could not explain why, or give any information concerning the origin of this tradition.

In processions, the narsiṅgas are the leading instruments. In Central Nepal they are always blown in pairs or in groups of even numbers, the number of narsiṅgas hired by a patron serves as a meter to indicate his economic standing. When more than two narsiṅgas are employed, they are played in pairs antiphonally. The idiosyncratic calls of individual playing traditions are distinctive trademarks for their specific localities (see Chapter 5).

Narsiṅga players are conscientious about the storage of their instruments.

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After playing, having been telescoped together, the narsiṅga is always hung up with the bell slightly higher than the mouthpiece. Explanations for this practice were that failure to do so results in the 'sound breaking' - perhaps a deterioration in tone is implied - and 'you don't stand an old man on his head to let him sleep'! By storing the instruments in this way, not only is the playing position maintained, but the Śrī Rām inscription remains uppermost (although reverence for the name was not mentioned). Interestingly, whilst the narsiṅgas of Central Nepal - those with Śrī Rām written on the bell - are always played in a vertical position, with the bell higher than the mouthpiece, in both East and West Nepal, there is no consistency in playing position - frequently, musicians play 'under-arm', with the bell lower than the mouthpiece. However, if there once was a connection between the Śrī Rām inscription and the maintenance of an elevated position for the bell, it is not acknowledged by today's musicians. During playing, the narsiṅga is supported at the first joint by the left hand, and at the mouthpiece by the right hand. The index and middle fingers (resting above the mouthpiece), and the thumb (resting below) create a seal between it and the mouth to prevent the escape of air. The narsiṅga (as with the other lip-vibrated instruments) may be played from any position on the mouth, unlike Western brass instruments, for which the embouchure is formed at the centre of the lips. Thus, when the narsiṅga player's 'lip goes', a change of embouchure position facilitates continued playing.

Narsiṅga playing technique involves the use of circular breathing (maintained in the same way as that for sahanai, described above); downward glissandi, produced by the successive relaxation of the embouchure; and a type of rapid tonguing which may be produced by repeated movement of the tongue (a) in and out of the mouthpiece, (b) back and forth under the top teeth, or (c) left to right inside the mouth cavity. Flutter tonguing is employed by experienced musicians for special effect (see Chapter 5). A new narsiṅga needs careful blowing-in to cultivate the characteristic rich tone.

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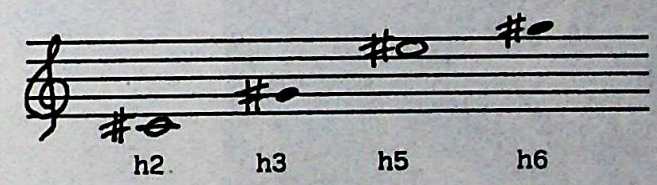
Karnāl

In the area north-west of Pokhara, the long straight conical bore natural trumpet, karnāl, substitutes for narsiṅga, being used singly or in pairs in the same way as the latter, to insert idiosyncratic fanfares intermittently. The karnāl are locally made in the hills by blacksmiths, in two telescoping copper sections, with an overall length of approximately 137cm, the final 23.5cm of which comprise a large temple bell-shaped bell-end (Plate 41). At the anterior end, the first 22cm form the double-layer cone of the mouthpiece, constructed in the same way as that of narsiṅga. The mouthpiece itself is cymbal-shaped - i.e. a cup with a wide rim, total diameter 3cm. The copper is not as finely beaten as that of the narsiṅgas made by the coppersmiths of the Kathmandu Valley, with the result that the instruments are quite heavy. In this area, and in some Eastern districts, narsiṅga and karnāl may be used in combination, interpolating contrasting figurations.

The karnāls of the Kaski-Baglung area are tuned to about C or C#. The fundamental and upper harmonics are extremely difficult to produce, and players tend to build patterns around harmonics h2 and h5 most frequently, with limited use of h3 and h6:



Other pañcai bājā instruments

Peculiar to Karnāli zone (e.g. Kalikot district), is the karnāli bājā - a very different instrument from the karnāl. It is a cylindrical bore natural trumpet (Plate 42), made of brass, with an overall length of 119cm, the distal 19.5cm comprising a gently flaring bell. The tubing (external circumference 7cm) is bent into a double loop, the bell and mouthpiece angled symmetrically, to describe a V-shaped angle from this central loop, which is supported by the musician's hand during playing. The other hand supports the karnāli bājā at the mouthpiece, the fingers

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Plate 41 (above): Karnāl (Baglung)

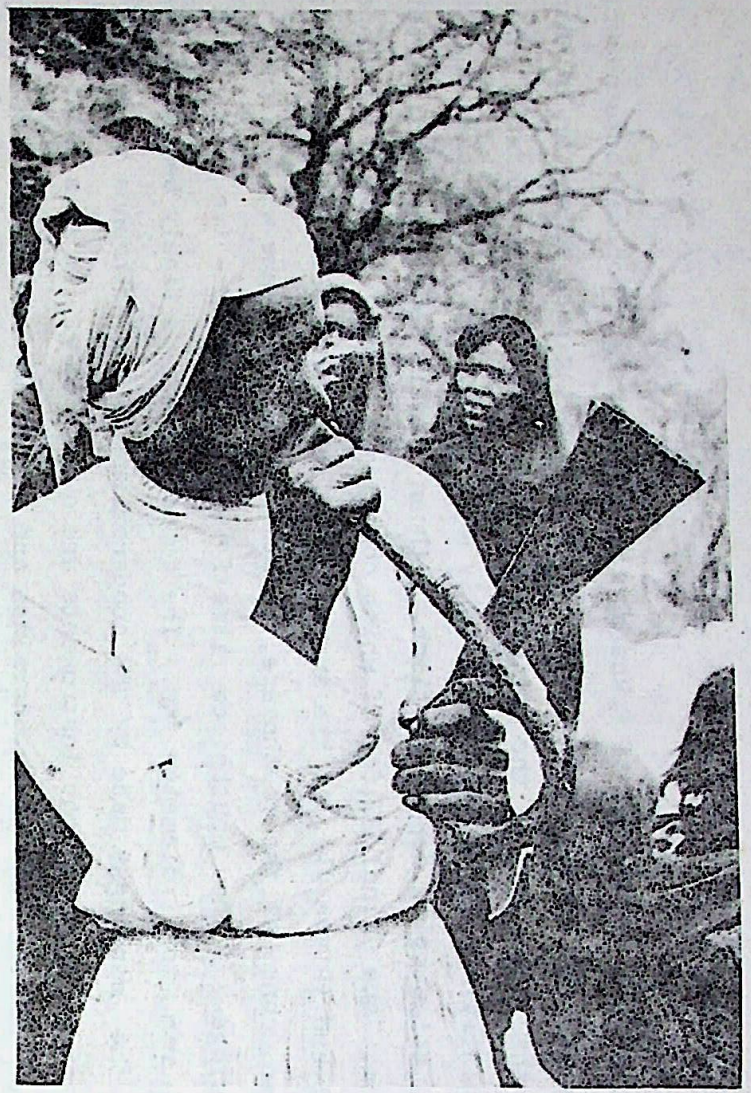

Plate 42 (right): Karnāli bājā (Kalikot)

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creating a seal between mouthpiece and embouchure. It is blown in the vicinity of shrines in honour of the presiding deity.

In Gorkha, on smaller occasions for which the services of a complete pañcai bājā are not required (for example, at the clothes blessing ceremony (lugā chegne pūjā) before a wedding, or for the first rice-feeding ceremony), one or two muralli are played. The muralli is a cylindrical bore bamboo notch flute with six finger holes, and six to eight sound holes of various sizes at the distal end, to help spread the sound. The lengths vary from about 42cm, with a bore diameter 1.3cm, to 52cm, with a bore diameter 1.5cm (Plate 43). As with sahanai, muralli is played with circular breathing.

On big occasions, for example, an election victory procession, or a sumptuous wedding, sometimes a pair of muralli is added to the pañcai bājā, or the ensemble may be augmented or replaced by band (byend) instruments, such as clarinet, trumpet, snare drum (tamar), tenor frame drum (ḍhol) and maraccas (rama).

Plate 43: Muralli (Gorkha)

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Instruments of the Ritual Ensembles

At Śivaite and Devī temples throughout Nepal, ritual ensembles provide music to accompany daily pūjās and sacrifices. Whilst in East and West Nepal, a single kettledrum (nagārā) with or without temple bell (ghaṇṭa) functions in this capacity, in Central Nepal (Lamjung to Nuwakot), that is, the area which came under the first direct influence of the Śāha dynasty, and where there is a complex network of shrines dedicated to sister deities, a trio of nagārā, rāsa (sahanai) and karnāl predominates, which may be expanded by a range of natural trumpets (kāhal, bheri, sikhār, bijuli bānā), as shown in Table 1 overleaf. At some shrines, pañcai bājās are also implemented. The instruments are bought and maintained by the temple guṭhis - land-based institutions providing the means of support for rituals, maintaining the temples and ritual paraphernalia, and providing the livelihoods of the nitual personnel, including the musicians. In the case of Gorkha Darbār, funding is direct from the government.

The instruments of the temple ensembles, indispensible to the rites they accompany, appear to be, first and foremost, ritual objects. Apart from the annual musical instruments' pūjā, the musicians also honour other ritual observances in relation to the instruments.

At Gorkha Darbār, three independently functioning ensembles are in use - the pañcai bājā, and the ritual ensembles of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth. Whilst the former is played at shrines inside and outside the palace, in a variety of ritual contexts, the latter two are used only in veneration of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth respectively.

The pañcai bājā (Plate 44) consists of six, rather than five instruments, namely, one each of sahanai, ḍholaḳi, damāhā, ṭyāmko, jhyāli and karnāl, which are owned by the government and are stored inside the Rāja Darbār (apart from the sahanai which is the player's own instrument and is taken home by him).[1] The ḍholaki, reputed to be very old (but whose age could not be ascertained), is squat, measuring only 31cm in length, and fat,

1. The Darbār provides the bells for all the sahanais in use there, but when they were replaced a couple of years ago, they were all too large to be of use, and the musicians had to provide their own.

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TABLE 1 : COMPOSITION OF RITUAL ENSEMBLES

District	Shrine	Nagārā	'Rāsa	Karnāl	Nāg-beli bājā	Bheri	Dhop bānā	Kāhal	Sikhār	Pañcai bājā
Lamjuṅg	Lamjung Darbār	* (*)	*	* (*)	(*)	(*)				(jhyali)
Gorkha	Kālikā Darbār	*	x2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Gorakhnāth's cave	*	*	*			*	*		
	Manakāmanā	*	*	*	*					
	Liglikoṭ	*	*	*						
	Namjuṅg Bhagawatī mandir	*								
	Laghamkoṭ	*	*	*						
Dhardiṅg	Jamruṅg Darbār									*
	Jamruṅg Śankha Devī	*	*	*						
	Kapalpānī Jolamukhī	*	*	*						
	Sallyankoṭ	x3	x2	x2				*	*[1]	
Nuwakoṭ	Nuwakot Bhairavī	*	*	*		*		*		

(*) = instruments not played by damāi 1. bāno

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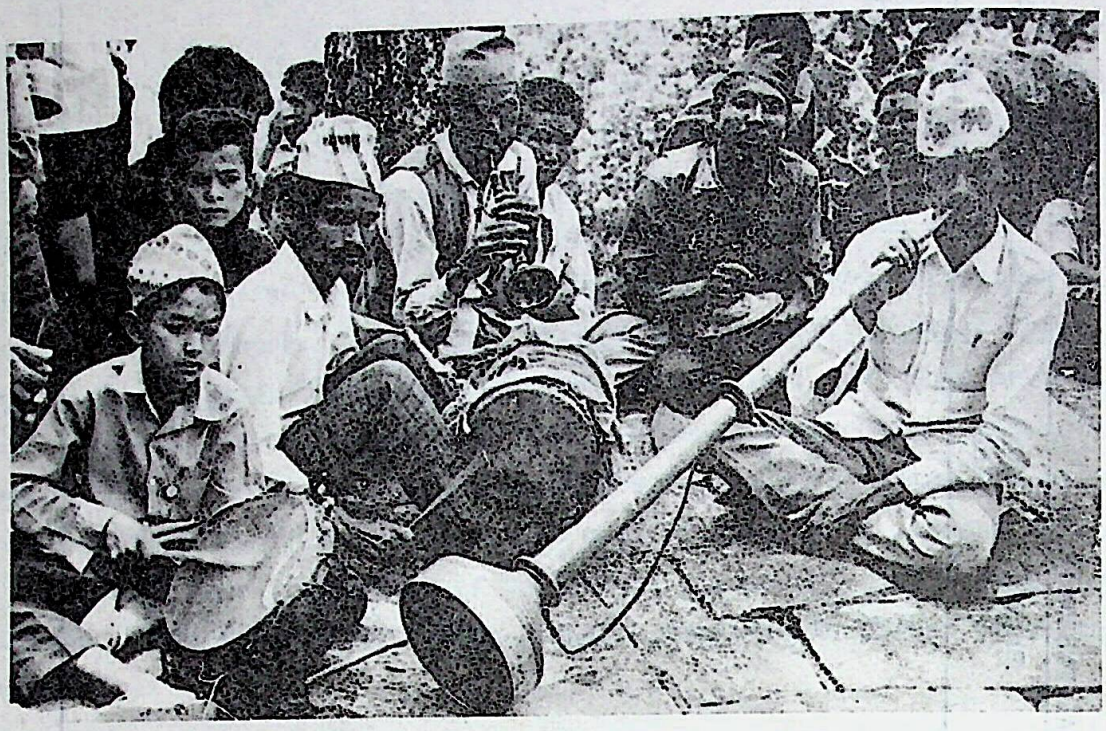

Plate 44: Gorkha Darbār pañcai bājā. Instruments left to right: damāhā, ḍholaki, sahanai, jhyāli, karnāl

Plate 45: Gorkha Kālikā Darbār nagārā and rāsa

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with an accentuated barrel shape, the circumference of the heads, 74.5cm (diameter 22cm) and 67.5cm (diameter 20cm), bulging to 68cm at the middle of the instrument. It is covered with a decorative cloth and frill. The skins of goats provided by the government for sacrifice to Kālikā during dasaĩ are used to replace the heads annually. Whilst the ṭyāmkos used in the wedding bands are usually made of wood, that of the darbār is made of copper, and like the ḍholaki, it is adorned with a decorative cloth. The diameter of the head, also made from the skin of a sacrificial goat, is 17cm, and the depth of the bowl, from the rim to the water-hole in the base, is 17cm. The circumference of the bowl at its widest point is 64cm. The other pañcai bājā instruments correspond with those described above.

At Gorkha Darbār, for the veneration of Kālikā, the pañcai bājā is joined by a nine-piece ensemble, which plays simultaneously with, and independently of the former. This ensemble is used exclusively in the context of the adoration of Kālikā, that is, for the bi-monthly sacrifices on aṣṭamī (eighth day of the lunar cycle), and at Caite and ṭhūlo dasaĩ. It consists of a pair of sahanai, nagārā, and a variety of natural trumpets: karnāl, dhop bānā, kāhal, bijuli bānā, bheri and sikhār. None of the latter are used melodically, but each has its own distinctive pattern on one to three pitches, which is inserted at intervals at the player's discretion.

A related ensemble of five instruments is in daily use in the worship of Gorakhnāth. These instruments, one each of rāsa (sahanai), nagārā, karnāl, dhop bānā and kāhal, are not used in any other context, or in combination with the other ensembles. Unlike the pañcai bājā and Kālikā ensemble instruments, these are not stored in the Rāja Darbār, but in a small room in the pavilion (Gorakhpāṭī) from where they are played, just below Gorakhnāth's cave-shrine. The fact that these ritual ensembles are comprised nine and five instruments respectively is noteworthy, these numbers being particulary auspicious in Hindu numerology, and these numbers recur in many musical and ritual contexts.

Of all the instruments, the large kettledrum, nagārā, is the most sacred and thus, is accorded the greatest respect. It is the minimum musical requirement at Tantric temples throughout Nepal, and at Gorkha Darbār and Manakāmanā, if there is not a full complement of musicians, the nagārā

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takes precedence over all the other instruments. At particularly auspicious occasions of the ritual calendar, temple ensembles may be augmented by additional kettledrums (usually damāhā played as nagārā with two thick sticks), as at Manakāmanā during dasaĩ. At Gorkha, also in the service of Kālikā, but completely independent of the pañcai bājā and the Kālikā ensemble (nagārā bānā), is the jor damāhā, a pair of damāhā, played as nagārā on specific occasions during the dasaĩ festival. Similarly, during dasaĩ, two single damāhā are played (as nagārā) at Gorkha's Upallokoṭ and Tallokoṭ.

Frequently, the nagārā shell is made of copper, in the same way as that of the damāhā. The Gorkha Darbār nagārās are made from an alloy of five metals (pañca dhātu) - gold, silver, copper, brass and ḍhaloṭ (an alloy of copper and zinc). Nagārā vary greatly in size, but on the whole, tend to be larger than damāhā. The dimensions of Kālikā's nagārā exceed those of the Darbār damāhā considerably, the respective diameters of head measuring 36cm and 29cm, the depth from rim to base-hole, 46cm and 28.5cm, and the circumference at the broadest part of the bowl, 123cm and 103cm. By comparison, the nagārās in use at Manakāmanā and the Nuwakot Bhairavī temple are of copper and are slightly smaller than that of Gorkha's Kālikā ensemble (although still larger than the damāhā), the diameter of the heads measuring 34cm and 33.8cm and the depth of the bowl 38cm and 38.5cm respectively. The broadest part of the damāhā bowl is usually at the rim, but for nagārā, it is often 5-10cm below, from where there is a slight inward taper to the rim. This is shown in Plate 46, in which the Nuwakot Bhairavī's damāhā (left) and nagārā (right) may be compared. Lacing techniques are also illustrated here - the damāhā having straight-lacing and the nagārā, compound Y-lacing.

The heads of the Gorkha Darbār nagārās are supplied from the skin of the biggest buffalo - the satār - sacrificed during dasaĩ. This beast represents the demon Mahiṣāsura, who, according to the Caṇḍi path of the Markaṇḍeya Purāna (c.700A.D.), managed to defeat the gods and establish himself in heaven, until he was slain by Kālikā (as Durgā) riding on a lion. During their battle, he assumed many forms, but when he became a buffalo, Durgā was able to decapitate him with her divine sword, and so restore heaven to the gods. Interestingly, in their myths, the Gorkha damāi ascribe a divine origin to their instruments, attributing their

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creation to Kālikā, who used the dismembered body of a demon - perhaps Mahiṣāsura is implied - for this purpose:

> Kālikā killed a demon, and from its body created musical instruments. They were created from the demon's nose, fingers and bones. The narsiṅga was made from its bones. The sahanai was made from its nose. Its skin was used for Kālikā's ḍholaki and damāhā heads, which was also used for the lacing of damāhā and dholaki.

Another version of this tale was also furnished:

> In the beginning, Kālikā ate human flesh only, and many people were killed, until Mahādev put a stop to the practice. From the bones of one of her victims, Kālikā created musical instruments: the skull became damāhā, and one of the ribs became narsiṅga.

Mireille Helffer was informed that many musical instruments were created from the body of a rākṣasa (demon) dismembered by Viṣṇu:

- de la colonne vertebrale (dhadh) serait ne le tambour dhol
- des oreilles (kan), les cymbals kamsatal
- du ventre (bhudi), la petite timbale ṭyāmko
- de la main droite, le tambour pakhavāj
- de la main gauche, les instruments a cordes: ektār, sitār, sāraṅgi
- de l'organ male, le hautbois sahanai

(Helffer 1977:56-7)

Each dasaĩ, the myth of the demonic source of their instruments becomes a reality for the musicians, when Mahiṣāsura is ritually slain, and the skin used for the nagārās. The enormous buffalo is brought into the Darbār on the morning of phūlpātī,[1] its arrival accompanied by the pañcai bājā playing the seasonal rāga, malaśrī, and receives offerings for three full days. It is propitiated and sacrificed at dusk on Mahānavamī, when the sun has half set, and its dispatch is accompanied by two gun-shots and a special rāga - the satār kāṭne bākya (buffalo-cutting tune) - which is not played in any other context, by the pañcai bājā, and by nine murrā and the rāg rāsa by the Kālikā ensemble.[2] The skinning of the satār is the first ritual event of vijaya daśamī.[3] The pañcai bājā plays the sacrificial rāga navagā whilst the knives are brought out, and at the moment when the Darbār butcher opens up the skin from the stomach, two gun-shots are fired, the pañcai bājā plays navagā again, and the Kālikā ensemble plays nine murrā and rāsa.

1. Phūlpātī - the seventh day of the dasaĩ lunar cycle, on which the spirit of the Goddess, embodied in the branch of a bel-tree, with other flowers and leaves (the phūlpātī) is established at the Darbār.
2. Murṛā - a drumming sequence, see Chapter 7.
3. Vijaya daśamī is the tenth day of the dasaĩ lunar fortnight, when the triumph of Good over Evil is commemorated.

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The skin is divided into two halves, the right side for Gorakhnāth and the left for Kālikā, and the musicians believe that depending on which side the satār falls during sacrifice, that side's nagārā will be blessed with a good tone for the coming year. The skin remains in storage in the Darbār for a year until the new moon (aũsi) immediately prior to the next dasaĩ celebration, when the two Darbār tanners, one each for Kālikā and Gorakhnāth, replace the heads of all the membranophones used in the three Darbār ensembles. The skins of goats sacrificed during dasaĩ are used for the heads of the other drums. Following the lacing of the nagārā heads, the tanners perform the pūjā of absolution, as described above, sacrificing chickens which are supplied by the Darbār. The lacing of the two nagārā is only tightened on specific dates - that of Kālikā's nagārā on the mornings of phūlpātī and of Caite dasaĩ, and that of Gorakhnāth on these two occasions, and again at bhaṇḍara aũsi.[1]

At Manakāmanā, the annual pūjā for the musical instruments takes place on Mahāṣṭami.[2] As at Gorkha Darbār, the head of the nagārā is replaced annually, using the skin of a sacrificial beast. However, this does not take place during dasaĩ, but at Kartik pañcamī,[3] the latter being Manakāmanā's biggest festival. On this occasion, a royal buffalo is sacrificed , and this skin supplies the new nagārā head.

At Gorkha Darbār, nagarcis always show respect for the nagārā by removing their shoes for playing, and fasting before playing. During the fifteen days of dasaĩ, they pay obeisance to the nagārā each morning, marking the head with a candrabindu (moon-dot: ँ), and offering red powder (abir), flowers and their greeting (namaskār). On vijaya daśamī, the Darbār priests hand out ṭīkā[4] and barley sprouts (jamara) to devotees and employees of the Darbār. The Kālikā nagarci and pañcai bājā nāike, having received the offering, first anoint the nagārā and ḍholaki respectively, before distributing the ṭīkā and barley sprouts to fellow musicians.

1. The kul-devatā pūjā of the Darbār's Kānphaṭa jogis, during Śravan.
2. The eighth day of the lunar fortnight during dasaĩ.
3. The fifth day of the lunar cycle.
4. An auspicious paste marked as a spot on the forehead.

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The pair of great nagārā (dam nagārā) installed by Chatra Śāha in 1609, according to an inscription on them, have become part of the 'ritual furniture' of the big courtyard (āgan) that lies between the Kālikā and Rāja Darbārs. Devotees to the Kālikā Darbār, having made offerings at the door, proceed to offer abir, rice and flowers to the dam nagārā, cannon, maulo (post to which sacrificial animals are tethered) and bell, and to put oil in the lamps, as part of a ritual circuit.

The concept of the kettledrum as an instrument of ritual significance is not confined to Nepal or to Hinduism. The Mughals of Persia had

> a monster kettledrum (kūrka) almost the height of a man which was played in pairs... It was part of the royal insignia and its tones accompanied the royal edicts. On the death of a sultan, after being played at the royal obsequies, it was broken to pieces.
>
> (Farmer 1939:12-13)

This suggests that the kettledrums were inseparably linked with the identity of the sultan, so that their independent existence was impossible.

The nagārā is played with two thick sticks (gajo, gajā). Those of Gorkha Darbār are made of sati-sāl (Dalbergia latifolia) wood and are ornamented with silver hand-grips. The dimensions of Gorakhnāth's nagārā sticks are given in Figure 4:

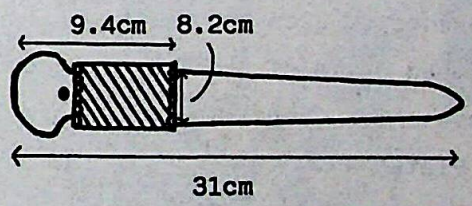

Fig. 4

These sticks date from A.D.1711, and until about four years ago, were in their original condition. Unfortunately, the worn silver of the hand-grips had to be replaced, and in so doing, the original inscription was lost. According to the present nagarci, this read:

68 sāl phāgun mainā kāle nagarci caṛāyako śrī khaṇḍāko gajā

'Śrī Khaṇḍa's sticks were offered by Kāle nagarci in the month of Phalgun B.S.1768'. The Manakāmanā nagārā sticks are much shorter than those in use at Gorkha, measuring only 25cm in length, the first 10cm of which are

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silver-plated hand-grips. The circumference of 8cm at the silver plating tapers gently to pointed tips (Plate 47).

Shawms used in temple ensembles are called rāsa, after the rāga which they play exclusively.[1] The instruments are the same as those of the popular bands, except that the bells, staples and pirouettes are always made of brass.[2] At Gorkha Darbār, the rāsa player removes his shoes to play, like the nagārā player, but this is not required of the sor (drone) sahanai.

The trumpets in use at the Gorkha Darbār are made by the coppersmiths of Āsan (Kathmandu) and Patan. Traditionally, new instruments were transported ceremonially on foot from the Kathmandu Valley by the old trade route to the north, via Triśulī and Ārūghāt. The instruments in current use at the Darbār are believed (by the musicians) to be between fifteen and twenty years old. When an old, worn-out instrument is replaced, it is 'laid to rest' in the Rāja Darbār, and instruments dating back to the time of Rām Śāha are reputed to be in storage there.

Whilst in the N.W. Pokhara area, the karnāl is used in the popular bands instead of narsiṅga, in Central Nepal, it is purely a ritual instrument. The karnāls of the Darbār consist of two telescoping copper sections, decorated with small brass pommels. Their length is 127cm, with a bore expanding to a circumference of 22cm before the bell. In contrast to the bulging chamber-pot-shaped bells of the N.W. Pokhara region instruments, the Darbār karnāls have short funnel-shaped bells, which flare to a circumference of 78cm (Plate 44).

There is an amazing variety of karnāl to be found in Central Nepalese ritual ensembles. The Manakāmanā karnāl is a totally different instrument from those in use at Gorkha Darbār, resembling rather a miniature Tibetan dungchen. It is constructed in copper, in three telescoping sections, having an overall length of 108cm. The conical bore flares evenly from a circumference of 4cm at the anterior end to 18cm at the top of the distal section. Its decrepit condition reveals that the bell-end is constructed in the same way as the mouthpieces of all these

1. One of the shawms played by the kusle of Bhaktapur is known as rasan.
2. At the Nuwakot Bhairavī temple, the shawms played by the kusle have silver fittings.

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Plate 46: Damāhā (left) and nagārā (right) (Nuwakot Bhairavī temple)

Plate 47: Manakāmanā nagārā bānā. Instruments, left to right: nāg-beli bājā, nagārā, karnāl, rāsa

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natural trumpets, with an outer casing concealing an inner cone, so that the bell appears to be more flared than it really is. Although the diameter of the bell's outer shell is 18.5cm, inside the bore flares only to a diameter of 11cm. The ornately crafted brass pommels at each joint are more characteristic of a Tibetan ritual trumpet, and the mouthpiece is not cup-shaped, as are those of the Gorkha Darbār karnāls, but is much bigger, with a diameter of 3.7cm, and is a flat dish shape. Once again, this corresponds more closely with the dungchen or laba (Thrasher 1984: II/493) than with other Nepali karnāls (Plate 47).

At other shrines, some ancient karnāls are so dilapidated as to be virtually unrecognizable, but apparently still playable! At one temple in Dharding, only the bottom half of the karnāl had survived, and the nagarci (who seemed as ancient as the instrument) blew directly into the top of the distal section of tube, which was almost too large for his mouth! At another Dharding shrine, a middle section of the karnāl had been lost, and the diminutive boy who was playing it did his utmost to prevent the loss of air at the ill-fitting middle joint by clasping the two ends together with his small hand! (Plate 48).

The karnāl of the Nuwakot Bhairavī temple is in reasonable condition, apart from some damage at the central joint. It is shorter and fatter than its Gorkha counterparts, having a total length of 93.2cm. The bore flares evenly from 6.8cm in circumference at the mouthpiece, to 13.9cm at the central joint and 31cm above the bell. The big funnel-shaped bell is 20.7cm in length, the diameter of the bell-end being 25.5cm. The mouthpiece is constructed in the usual way, with the outer shell concealing an inner cone that reduces to a small hole in the centre of the cup of the mouthpiece, which is built onto the outer shell. In this case, the double-layer mouth-tube measures 15.4cm in length (Plates 49 and 53). A comparison of the mouthpieces of the ritual trumpets in use at Gorkha Darbār and at Nuwakot may help to illustrate the diversity to be found. Plates 50 and 51 show the rimless cup mouthpiece of the Gorkha Darbār kāhal and the detachable and interchangeable mouthpiece of the bheri, sikhār and bijuli bānā. Plates 52 and 53 show the flat-rimmed cups of the Nuwakot kāhal and karnāl. Players at Gorkha sometimes dispense with the detachable mouthpieces, blowing directly into the tubing (Plate 54).

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Plate 48: Karnāl (Jamruṅg Śankha Devī mandir, Dhardiṅg)

The dhop bānā is a similar instrument to the karnāl, being a straight, conical bore natural trumpet with bell and integral mouthpiece (Plate 56). Like the Darbār karnāl, it is made from copper, in two telescoping sections and decorated with brass pommels at the intersections. However, the overall size of dhop bānā is greater than that of karnāl, having a total length of 134cm (7cm longer than karnāl), with a bore flaring to a circumference of 24cm before the bell (2cm more than karnāl). Its main distinguishing feature is its large, bowl-shaped bell, which flares to a circumference of 92cm (14cm more than the angular, funnel-shaped bell of karnāl).

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Plate 49: Karnāl and kāhal (Nuwākoṭ Bhairavī temple)

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Plate 50: Kāhal mouthpiece
(Gorkha Darbār)

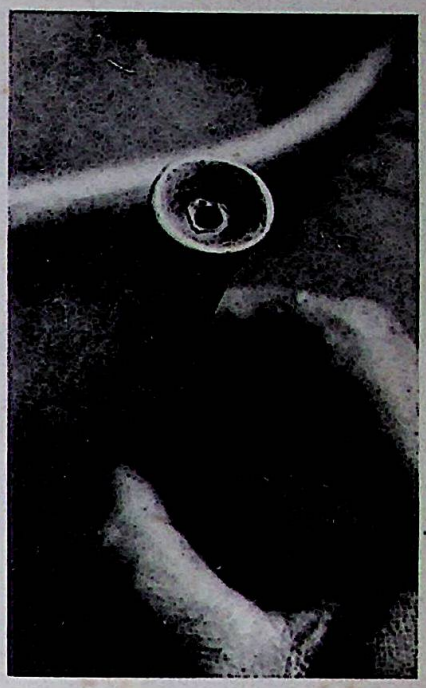

Plate 51: Bheri/sikhār/
bijuli bānā mouthpiece
(Gorkha Darbār)

Plate 52: Kāhal mouthpiece
(Nuwakot Bhairavī temple)

Plate 53: Karnāl mouthpiece
(Nuwakot Bhairavī temple)

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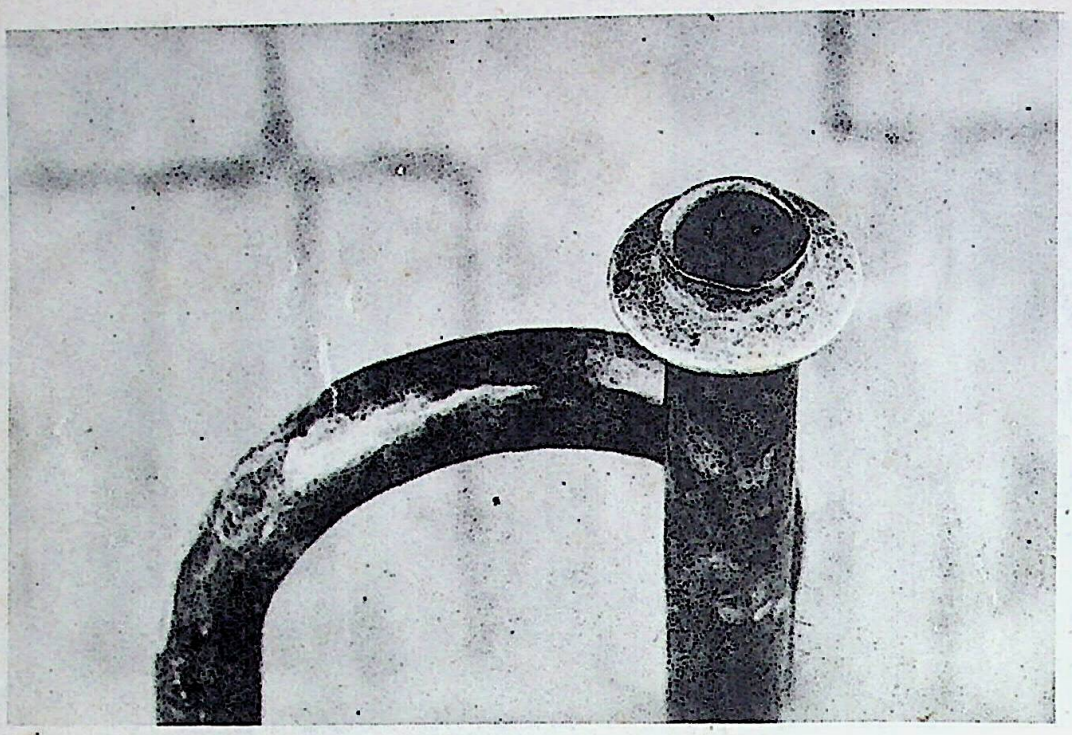

Plate 54: Bheri without mouthpiece (Nuwakot)

Plate 55: Kānphaṭa Jogi playing nāth (Upallokoṭ Bhairav shrine, Gorkha)

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Plate 56: Kāhal and dhop bānā (Gorkha Darbār Gorakhpāṭī)

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The kāhal is a straight conical bore natural horn with an integral mouthpiece and without bell (Plate 56). It is also known as the Bhairav bājā, possibly because it was used originally in the worship of this deity. Today, the Kānphaṭa jogis use a similar instrument, the nāth (Plate 55), not only in honour of Gorakhnāth, but also for Bhairav on occasions such as bhaṇḍara aũsi and Caṇḍi purṇimā.

Kālikā's kāhal measures 85cm in length, with a bore flaring to a circumference of 46cm. After the first 22cm at the anterior end, which comprise the typically-constructed double-layer mouthpiece, the kāhal body is made from a single piece of copper, decoratively finished with two brass pommels and divergent vertical lines gouged into the copper. During playing, the musician's hand creates a seal between lips and mouthpiece, and the weight of kāhal is supported by the floor.

The kāhal of Nuwakot is much shorter than that of Gorkha Darbār, measuring only 50.3cm in length, and the bore flaring to a circumference of 40.5cm. After the mouthpiece construction, measuring 15.6cm, the cone of the body is made from one sheet of copper which has been soldered along the seam. The instrument is beautifully decorated, the copper having been beaten into a series of swirls (Plate 49).

Three copper, cylindrical bore natural trumpets with detachable mouthpieces are in use in the Kālikā ensemble - the sikhār, bheri and bijulibānā. The bores of all three trumpets (measured externally) are 5.3cm in circumference, and the detachable mouthpieces (mori), each 11cm in length are interchangeable between them, although some players dispense with the mouthpiece, and blow directly into the tubing, as shown in Plate 57). The uniformity of the bores, shallow-cup mouthpieces and the workmanship of these instruments suggests a common maker, although this could not be confirmed by the musicians.

The designs of these three trumpets are highly individual, however. The tubing of sikhār has a 90° bend downwards, approximately 9cm from the mouthpiece, and after another 18cm, a 180° bend upwards, so that the tubing doubles back on itself for the same length of 18cm. There is a final upward bend of about 90°, so that the conical bell lies almost in the same plane as the mouthpiece (Plate 57). The overall length of the sikhār (including detachable mouthpiece) is 90cm, the final 20cm of which comprise the bell.

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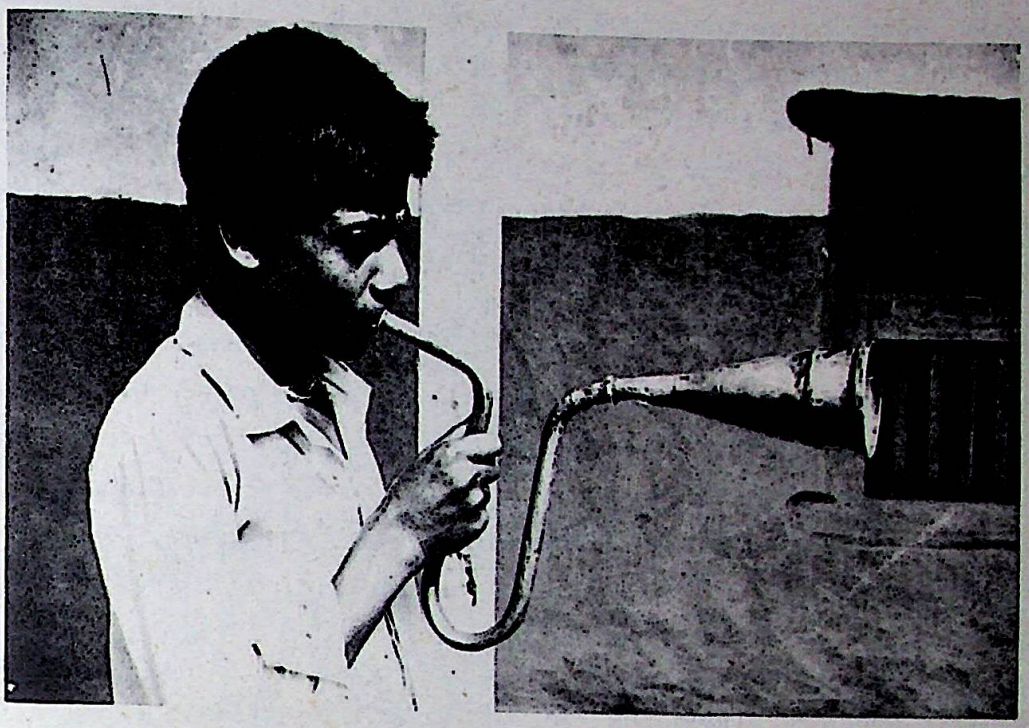

Plate 57: Sikhār (Gorkha Kālikā Darbār)

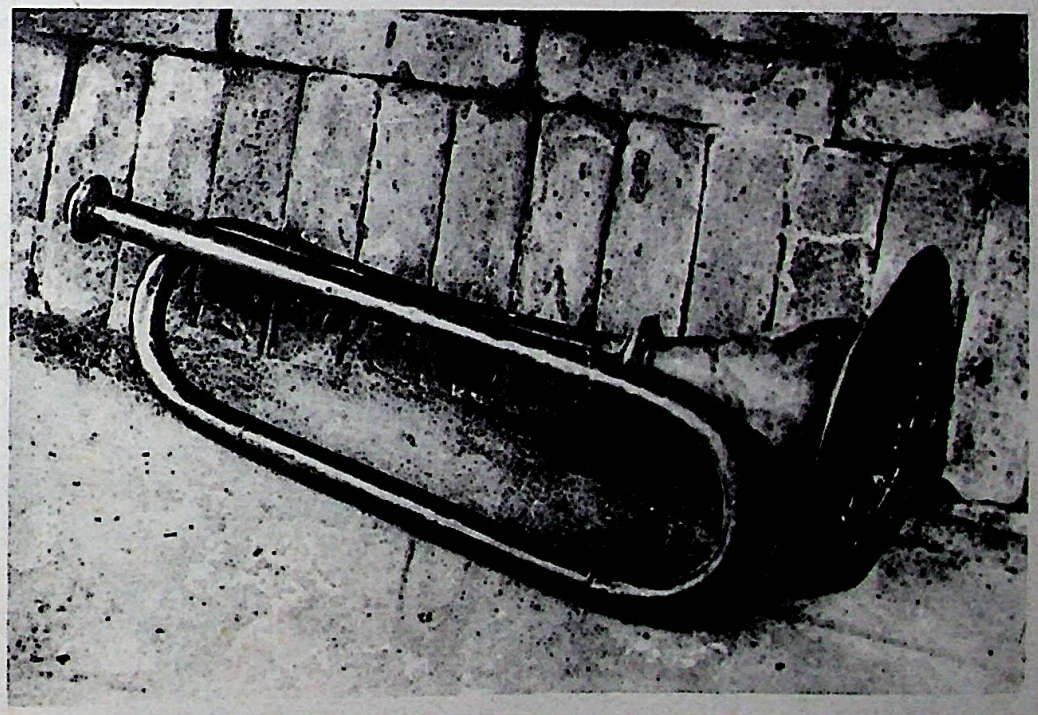

Plate 58: Bheri (Nuwakot Bhairavī temple)

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The bheri resembles a Western trumpet in overall shape, without the valves and extra tubing. The body of the bheri is bent double to form an elongated loop below the mouthpiece and bell, which lay parallel to one another, the mouthpiece extending over the proximal end of the loop, and the bell protruding from above the distal bend. Its total length is 138cm, the final 16cm of which is the bulb-shaped bell, which measures 22cm in circumference at its broadest point. The bell ends in a broad-rimmed flange, measuring 51.5cm in circumference (Plate 58).

The bheri of Nuwakot Bhairavi temple is much larger than the Gorkha instrument, having a total length of 159cm, the last 17cm of which flares into the bulb-shaped bell. The circumference of the bore is 7.4cm, which reaches 32cm at the widest point of the bell. The distal flange has a diameter of 19.9cm. The bheri is said to call "Bhairavi, Bhairavi, Bhairavi".

The bijuli bānā - 'lightening' or 'thunderbolt' instrument - is also known as nāg-beli bājā - 'serpent-shaped' instrument - due to its shape. The four loops of its body lead to a serpent head, whose open mouth provides the bell (Plates 59 and 60). The total length of the instrument is 159cm (including the detachable mouthpiece of 11cm), and the bore is cylindrical until the neck of the bell. Apart from the mouthpiece and bell, the entire length of tubing is curved into a series of four consecutive loops of almost 360° each. Of these, the first and the third from the mouthpiece curve upwards, and the second and the fourth interlock with these and curve downwards, the overall form being rather like two exaggerated 'S'-bends. The loops of the body increase in size from anterior to distal ends, the upper plane of the instrument diverging from the lower plane. The mouthpiece lies along the lower plane, whilst the bell points upwards, following the upper plan', as shown in Fig. 5 :

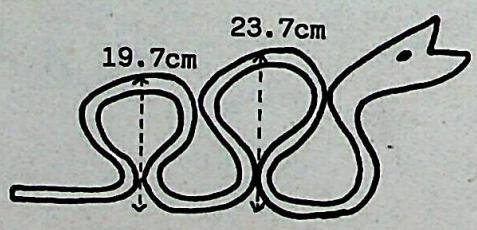

Fig.5

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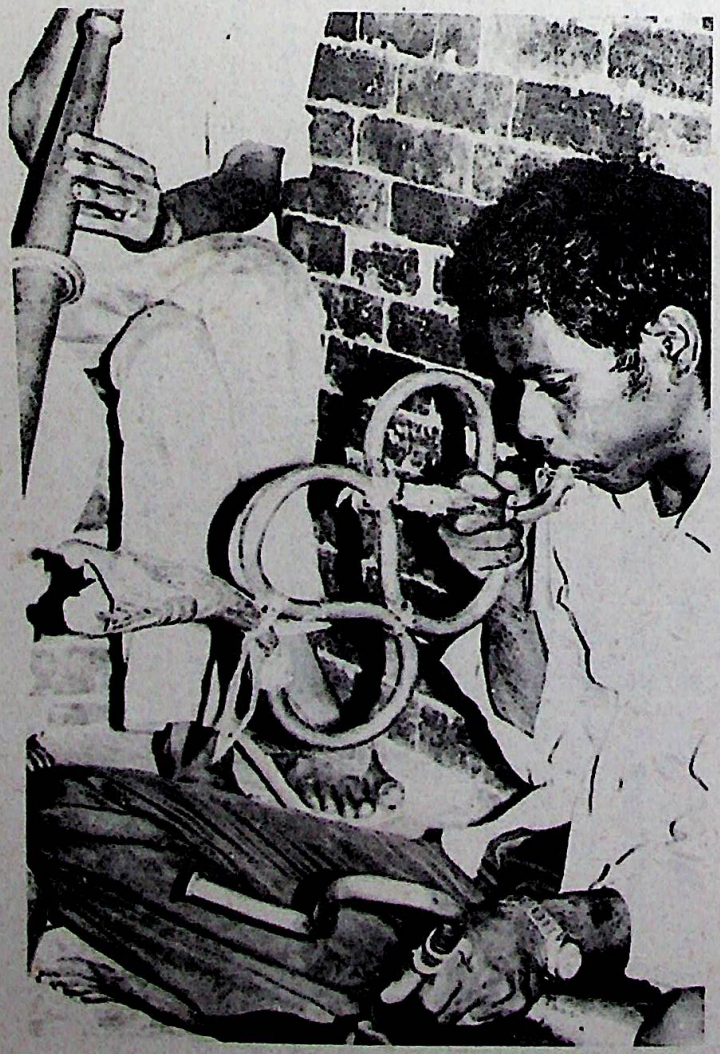

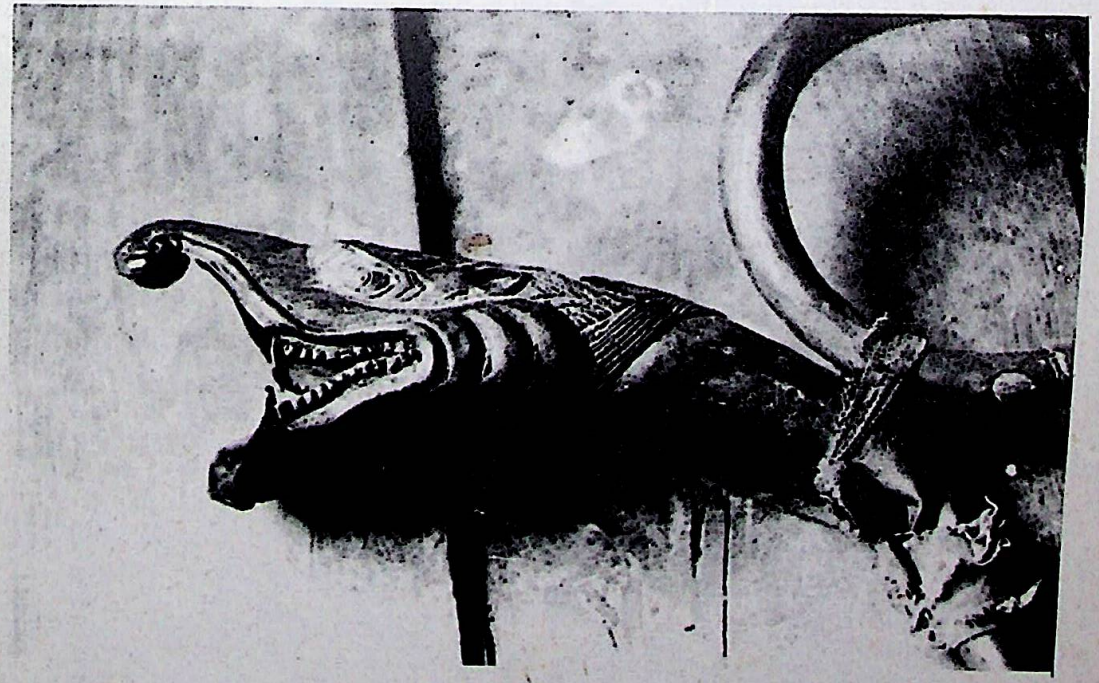

Plate 59 (left): Bijuli bānā (Gorkha Kālikā Darbār)

Plate 60 (above): Bijuli bānā, detail

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The finely crafted features of the serpent head bell, length 21cm, include a set of fangs and a tongue.

The nāg-beli bājā at Manakāmanā is a slightly shorter instrument than Gorkha's bijuli bānā, having a length (without mouthpiece) of 140cm. The mouthpiece, now missing, was thought by the musicians to have been about 10cm in length. An accurate measurement of the bore was difficult to obtain, as the instrument is held together by cotton binding, but at the anterior end, the external circumference of the bore measures 5.3cm (corresponding exactly with that of Gorkha's bijuli bānā), and appears to remain cylindrical until 20cm from the distal end, where it begins to flare into the serpent-head bell. The copper tubing is bent into four loops in the form of a snake, as with the Gorkha instrument, with the bell pointing upwards. Whereas the mouthpiece of the latter lies along the horizontal plane of the lower loops of the body, that of the Manakāmanā instrument would have been angled downwards, following the plane of the upturned bell. The bell is larger and more rounded than that of Gorkha Darbār's, anthropomorphically resembling a docile fish rather than the ferocious fanged snake of Kālikā, and without the fine detail of the latter (Plate 47).

This type of anthropomorphic design is not unique to Nepal. In India, the serpent-shaped trumpet nāg-phani is found, and in Burma, a bronze trumpet in the form of two fish intertwined together, with their heads as the bells (Jenkins 1983:62). In India and Nepal, the nāg-beli bājā is used exclusively in the worship of Śiva, Gorakhnāth and Devī in their various manifestations. Snakes (nāga) are particularly revered by Nepalese Śivaites, who associate them with water and the giving of rain. Lord Śiva, who finds the sound of snakes appealing, likes to hear nāg-beli bājā, because it reminds him of his beloved serpents. According to Darnāl, the nāg-beli bājā is used in a number of Kānphaṭa rituals, including the initiation ceremony at which a jogi receives his earrings (Darnal, R.S. B.S.2044 :2-3). On moonless nights during the month of Kartik (Oct-Nov), jogis from Gorkha Darbār, in a tranced state, make a round of Gorkha Bajār to bestow their blessings on each household, the following mornings receiving gifts in return for their benefactions. They announce their nocturnal presence by blowing upon a trumpet, which carries great mystical power, and is too sacred to be seen by anyone

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other than an initiated jogi. This instrument is reputed by locals to be a trumpet in the form of a serpent.

During dasaĩ it is customary for craftspeople to perform pūjās for their tools, drivers for their vehicles and musicians for their instruments. The Gorkha Darbār musicians perform pūjās for their instruments individually in their homes on aṣṭamī morning, having fasted and taken a ritual bath. On aṣṭamī afternoon, the Darbār provides the two nagarcis and the pañcai bājā nāike with the pūjā requirements for the rituals on behalf of the three ensembles which are observed on navamī morning. The pūjās take place at the homes of the nagarcis and nāike, the former sacrificing goats, and the latter, a chicken. The jor damāhā is divided between the Kālikā and Gorakhnāth ensembles.

For the Kālikā ensemble's pūjā, the nagarci's eldest son officiated as part of his apprenticeship as nagarci. In the morning, he was required to fast, take a ritual bath, and dress in the priestly garb of white cotton dhoti.[1] On the ring finger of the right hand some pieces of kus, a type of dried grass, Poa cynosuroides, were tied, thereby investing him with the powers of priest. The ground in front of the house was prepared with a fresh coating of cow-dung and clay, and the nagarci began by marking out the consecrated area with lines drawn in rice flour (rekhi), as shown in Fig.6 :

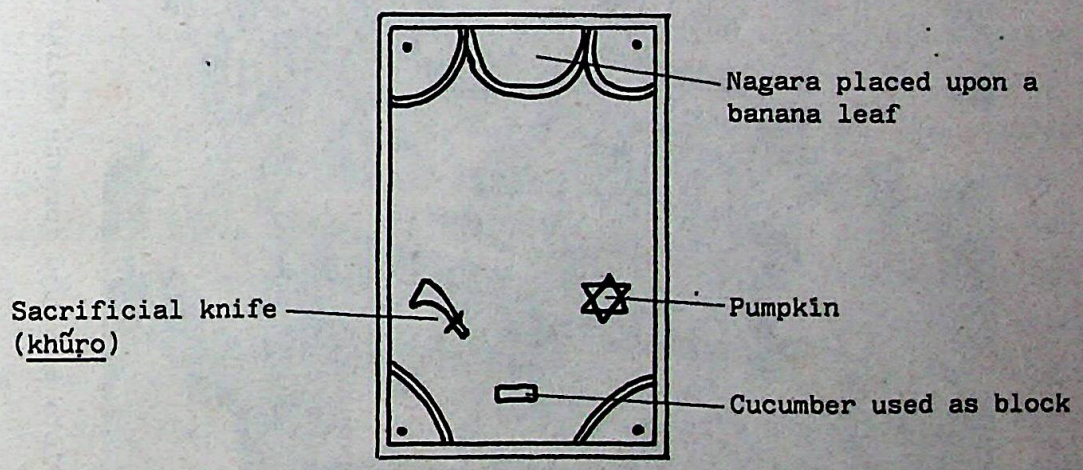

Fig. 6

1. A form of male dress, consisting of a long strip of cloth which is tied around the waist.

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Plate 61: Pūjā for the Kālikā nagārā bānā on Mahānavamī at the nagarcis's home

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A banana leaf is placed at the top, upon which the nagārā and other instruments are seated, and the other ritual paraphernalia is located as shown in Fig. 6. The Darbār-supplied pūjā requirements, including rice, three colours of ṭīkā, sugar, betel nut, sweetmeats, a strip of red cloth, holy water and bananas, supplemented by those supplied by the nagarci - husked and unhusked rice, milk mixed with sugar, coconut, cinnamon and cardomom, barley (jamara) and sweetcorn sprouts, jautil (a mixture of sprouting barley and sesame seeds), an earthenware pitcher (ghailā) daubed with cow-dung and tika and containing water, guava, peanuts, achetā, curds, oil-wick lights, incense, an oil-wick lamp made from leaf-plates, sweetmeats (jhiliyā̃), and spirit (raksi) are laid out before the instruments (Plate 61).

The pūjā commences with the sprinkling of consecrated water brought from the Darbār, and the lighting of the oil-wick lamp and incense-burner. Then the instruments are propitiated. The nagārā has a handful of achetā and another of flowers offered to it, with incense and wick-lights, and the same is done for the other instruments. Throughout the preparation and the pūjā, a sahanai and dholaki (not Kālikā's) play the sacrificial rāga navagā. The sacrificial pumpkin, knife (khũro) and the cucumber that serves as the block, are each propitiated in turn. Before the propitiation of the goat, the spiced milk is sprinkled everywhere, and afterwards, it is given a morsal from each plate of offerings (sagun) to eat. The sacrifice of the pumpkin and the goat may then proceed. Once the pumpkin has been cut, the goat is sprinkled with spirit until is shakes violently, indicating that it has accepted propitiation, and then is decapitated onto the cucumber, which is also cut through. The head of the goat is placed before the nagārā, and the carcass is carried around the sacrificial area three times, depositing a trail of blood, before its blood is shaken over the nagārā and other instruments. Immediately the pūjā has been completed, the instruments are played - on the nagārā, nine murrā are sounded, and the other instruments play navagā. After being played, the nagārā is replaced on the banana leaf and annointed with barley sprouts. Ṭīkā and offerings (prasād) are distributed to the assembled musicians, the goat is cooked, and everyone enjoys a feast.

Whereas the Darbār pañcai bājā plays at a variety of shrines for deities including Caṇḍī, Mahādev and Gaṇeś, the two nagārā bānā are only used

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in connection with the worship of Kālikā and Gorakhnāth at the Darbār. The Gorakhnāth ensemble never plays other than at the Gorakhpāṭī (except for its navamī pūjā, as described above), and the Kālikā ensemble only leaves the Darbār twice a year, apart from the pūjā, to accompany the phūlpātī processions at the beginning and end of dasaĩ. The function of the latter procession is the ritual disposal of the leaves and flowers which comprise the phūlpātī. The outward journey has the ceremonial solemnity characteristic of the preceding dasaĩ rituals, with the procession consisting of pañcai bājā playing phāgu, nagārā bānā, two torch bearers, a lauro[1] bearer, the maṅgalinī and kulcinī[2] bearing the sacred water pot (kalaś) beneath an umbrella, and the phūlpātī carried in a litter (ḍoli). The disposal of the phūlpātī is marked by two gunshots, and the playing of phāgu by the pañcai bājā and nine murrā and rāsa on nagārā bānā. As soon as this is over, the atmosphere changes, the ceremonial tension is released and all the ritual paraphernalia is dismantled or put away. The umbrella and litter are folded, the kalaś is carried nonchalantly on a man's shoulder, and there is no processional formation for the return journey. Whilst the pañcai bājā plays entertainment music (cãcari, jhyāure, khyāli) for the homeward trip, the instruments of the nagārā bānā are treated like the other ritual objects, and are carried back to the Darbār unplayed.

The manner in which some ritual instruments are stored supports the contention that they are considered first and foremost to be ritual objects, and secondly, musical instruments. Gorakhnāth's instruments are stored in the Gorakhpāṭī pavilion, and the Kālikā ensemble and pañcai bājā instruments in the Rāja Darbār. When the pañcai bājā plays at the three Rani Pokhari temples for the evening (ārati) pūjās from Āśvin to Kartik) purṇimās, however, the complete ensemble is stored inside the Muralighar Nārāyaṇa temple. At the Bhagawatī temple near Namjuṅg, approximately 6Km east of Gorkha Bajār, a single nagārā is played daily. Because the officiating brahmin priest lives near to the shrine, the nagārā is stored inside his house. Considered as musical instruments, with their inherent pollution, it would be unthinkable for these instruments to be taken inside a brahmin house, let alone a temple. Their presence there can only be explained if they are viewed as ritual objects.

1. A silver stick hung with auspicious cloth, kus grass and bananas.
2. Three auspicious female singers from the royal household in Kathmandu.

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At Manakāmanā, the instruments are kept in the homes of the musicians who bring them to the temple. Regardless of whether or not they are actually played, they are laid out before the deity twice daily. The nagārā is placed on one of its purpose-made plinths, in the morning on the east side, and in the evening on the west side of the temple, facing outwards, with the nāg-beli bājā placed on its left and karnāl on its right. Frequently, the nagārā is the only instrument which is played.

At Manakāmanā, although photographs of the instruments could be taken freely, initially the nagarci was unwilling to grant me permission to measure them, on the grounds that it would be disrespectful to them. He conceded later, however. At Gorkha, the Darbār administration was extremely sensitive about the photographing of the instruments, was reluctant to permit the measuring of the nagārās in use, and refused permission to measure the dam nagārā stored in the courtyard of the Darbār.

This kind of sensitivity reinforces the contention that the instruments in use in ritual ensembles are more than just the tools of the musical trade. The respect shown to the instruments, the manner in which they are stored and how they are used all point to their ritual significance. They number amongst the sacred possessions of the deities whom they serve and may be viewed as ritual objects which produce auspicious sounds in honour of these deities.

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4

THE DAMĀI:

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Within the Nepalese caste hierarchy established by Jang Bahadur Rana in 1854 and laid out in the Muluki Ain, the damāi tailor-musicians rank at the bottom of the social scale, together with the other Nepali musician castes (gāine, bādi) and craftspeople (kāmi, sārki). The Muluki Ain of 1854 divides society into five strata: the 'sacred thread wearers', the 'non-enslavable' and 'enslavable alcohol drinkers' being pure castes, with group four being 'impure but touchable', and finally, the untouchable castes (pāni nacalnyā choi chiṭo hālnuparnyā). The sub-strata of the last group are ranked as follows:

Kāmi	(blacksmiths)	of equal status
Sārki	(tanners, shoemakers)	
Kaḍārā	(stemming from unions between Kāmi and Sārki)	
Damāi	(tailors and musicians)	
Gāine	(minstrels)	
Bādi	(musicians)	
Poṛe	(Newār skinners and fishermen)	
Cyāme	(Newār scavengers)	

(Höfer 1979:45)

Interestingly, the parallel caste of Newāri shawm players, the kusle, rank slightly higher than their damāi counterparts, being an impure but touchable caste (Höfer 1979:45).[1]

1. The kusle (or jugi) fall in the fourth division (pāni nacalnyā choi chiṭo hālnunaparnyā) of the Muluki Ain, together with the kāsai (Newār butchers who play funeral music). Unlike the damāi, the kusle perform a range of ritual duties in addition to their tailoring and musical activities (i.e. playing music for weddings and at temples), which may

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The concept of purity is the basis of the caste hierarchy, and the groups are ranked primarily according to rules governing commensality, (that is, the acceptance or non-acceptance of significant foods - cooked rice (bhāt) and water), and sexual relations. Thus, the position of the damāi within the system is explained in the Muluki Ain as higher than the gāine

> because they do not take food from the Gāine and because they refuse to accept bhāt from the off-spring of a marriage between a Damāi man and a Gāine woman...
>
> The next higher are the Kaḍārā, offspring of marriages between Kāmi and Sārki, because they do not accept food from the damāi.
>
> (Höfer 1979:99)

According to Höfer (1979:101), occupation is only a 'secondary criterion for status allocation', which helps to explain the disparity in status of the damāi and kusle. Undoubtedly, the impure nature of the work of some of the untouchable castes is an important contributory factor responsible for the ascription of low status. In the case of the damāi, pollution is incurred through their contact with animal skins (the heads of their drums), and because their saliva comes into contact with their wind instruments. Some untouchable castes seem to observe untouchability between themselves, a point noted by Höfer (1979:110). In Gorkha, it was apparent that the damāi do not accept cooked rice from the sārki, despite the fact that the latter rank higher in the social scale.

Since 1963 the legal implications of the Muluki Ain have been abolished, but only a minority of educated or highly modernistic city-dwellers ignore caste distinctions. The rural population still think of caste in traditional terms. In order to throw off the stigma of untouchability, the caste names damāi, sārki and gāine have been replaced by Pariyār (family member), Nepāli, Viṣṇu Karma and Gandharva (celestial musician) respectively in the Gorkha area.

account for their slightly enhanced social standing. For example, during funeral (śraddhā) rites, the kusle occupy the central role as mediators between the spirit and human worlds. In some temples, they perform ritual duties for the Kanphaṭā jogis, act as cleaners and also prepare pūjās by cleaning and laying out the ritual vessels. Their folklore connects them with both Jālandhar and Gorakhnāth, and they believe themselves to have been created from kus grass by Mahādev. Another story relates how they revived Brahma after Śiva had cut off one of his heads, which Unbescheid posits as a possible explanation for their involvement in the Newār śraddhā ceremony (Unbescheid 1980: 130-35).

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Still, in Nepalese social behaviour, the concept of untouchability has far-reaching implications, apart from the non-acceptance of food and water and the taboos concerning sexual relations with higher castes. Pure castes avoid physical contact with the occupational castes, and purify (by sprinkling a few drops of water) things which have come into contact with them. Members of higher castes never enter the homes of the depressed castes, and vice versa. Thus, when providing music for a wedding, the damāi play outside the homes of their employers, and are feasted outside, separated from the guests, and eat from disposable (leaf) plates.

Normally, brāhmins do not officiate on behalf of the occupational castes although today, if the remuneration is sufficient, lower-ranking (i.e. alcohol or meat consuming) brāhmins may accept the work. Frequently, the role of priest is fulfilled from within the family, in the case of the damāi, by a son-in-law or sister's son, who becomes ordained to act in this capacity once kus grass (Poa cynosuroides) has been tied around the ring finger of his right hand. Traditionally, the damāi do not play for gāine weddings, but these days they will do so for an appropriate fee, but they will not accept the food of the wedding feast. Similarly, if they play for a Muslim wedding, they will not accept cooked food.

The topography of Nepalese settlements reflects the status differences between the inhabitants. Houses are clustered in caste groupings, with the homes of the occupational castes on the fringes of the settlement area. Thus, in Gorkha, the damāi live outside the bajār area, on the ridge above the town, half-way between the bajār and the Darbār in the hamlets of Rānāthok, Gairigaũ and Pokharāthok, as outlined in Chapter 1.

The caste system of the Nepali Hindus absorbed all the ethnic groups as the middle rungs of the social ladder, so that even when interacting with non-Nepalis, the status of the Nepali occupational castes is still depressed. Fürer-Haimendorf made the following observations concerning the status of the damāi within a Buddhist community in Western Nepal:

> ...there are in most villages of Thak Khola members of the untouchable castes of Kāmi (blacksmith) and Damāi (tailors and drummers)... Their untouchability is not the result of local developments, but is clearly due to the fact that they were already tinged with the reputation of untouchability when they

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> first came in contact with the Buddhist populations of Thak Khola, and were accepted by the latter at the valuation of the Hindu society in which they had their roots... (They) exist on the outer fringe of society without any chance of improving their depressed position.
>
> (Fürer-Haimendorf 1979:158)

Although it seems incongruous that such a low-status group should be considered auspicious and indispensible to society, this is by no means an exclusively Nepalese or Asian phenomenon. Speaking of the status of the Bala musician of the former Belgian Congo, Merriam observes:

> There emerges... a complex social pattern... Even though the social status of the musician remains low, his importance to the society is very high. Though as an individual he may be scorned and stereotyped as a person of little consequence, his functions in the society make him essential.
>
> (Merriam 1973:269)

The dichotomy of auspiciousness versus disreputability or marginality seems particularly pronounced in the case of shawm players, as Hoerburger points out:

> Shawms, wherever they occur, from northwest Africa to the Balkans and down to southern Asia, are always played by outcasts of one sort or another: in the Balkan states and in Turkey only by gypsies; in Arabic countries by Negroes; in Afghanistan by Jats (a kind of gypsy) or by the socially low members of the barber profession. Yet very important social tasks are associated with the playing of shawms.
>
> (Hoerburger 1970:143)

In Ladakh, the shawm is played by an untouchable caste of carpenter-muscians, the Mon (Erdman 1983:152-5); in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal by the ghāsi leatherworkers (Dick & Babiracki 1984:II/739-41); in South India by barber-musicians (Day 1891:95-7), and there are examples to be found throughout South Asia.

The anomaly of the depressed status but auspicious quality of the damāi jāt is rationalized in their folk-lore by stories relating to a 'respectable' origin. Pradīp Rimāl collected the following story from the damāi of Karnāli region:

> In the beginning, at festival times there were no musicians in the villages. One day, in one villager's house, an occasion was being celebrated. He wanted to celebrate really well by having music, and so, made a damāhā from copper. He played it with two sticks.[1] Following this, all the people of his

1. In the Karnāli region, damāhā is played with two thin angled sticks, not the single thick stick used in Central Nepal.

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community said to him, "Just as you struck the damāhā with sticks the first time, from now on, you must always do instrument-playing work in our society".

On the day of the celebration, a great many guests went together to his house. His daughter, bringing her small son also came to the house. The small boy was given the damāhā to play, and on seeing this, the villagers handed over the job of playing musical instruments to him. Because they played the damāhā, they became known as damāi. As for the mother, in tears, she said to the villagers, "Don't make my son a damāi - grant my request". Her elder brother reminded her, "Don't worry bahinī, you will get food. Paddy will be given. You will have new clothes to wear. At weddings and vratabandha your son will be in front. My nephew will not plough, will not dig with a bāusi (an agricultural implement), but will sit on god's seat, and will go in front of kings". In this way, the older brother explained to his sister.

(Translated from Rimāl B.S.2028:35)

In this story, the fall in status brought about by playing musical instruments is acknowledged, but compensated for by the rewards - material and spiritual - which may be accrued from this service. In Gorkha, this story is known, but with the variation that the boy, being little, is given the smaller kettledrum, ṭyāmko, to play:

At first, in our Nepal, everyone was the same. There were no damāi, no sārki, no kāmi, no brahmins or chetris. There was only one caste. A festival was to be celebrated. The whole community gathered, and asked "What shall we do? We must observe this festival. A musical instrument is needed, but we have no musicians. Also, we have no blacksmiths or leatherworkers - there is only one caste". And so, all the castes had to be arranged. While they were arranging, the most senior man made a speech: "What shall we do? We must bring a ṭyāmko", and after the ṭyāmko had been brought: "This ṭyāmko must be played. Who will play it?" Everyone answered, "Give it to our youngest brother to play. He is small, and so is the ṭyāmko. Give it to him to play". He played it, and after that became a damāi. Another brother became sārki, because skins were needed for the drum heads, and another became kāmi, in order to make the instruments.

From this time the (work) habits were established, and there were damāi, sārki, kāmi, Newār, chetri and bāhun. Later, other instruments were made. The children and grandchildren of the youngest brother had to do this work. They bought other instruments, and soon there were nine. They set up their own households, and had children and grandchildren, as did their neighbours. They had a lot of work. They had become damāi. First of all they were given the ṭyāmko to play, and then they became damāi.

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Another myth current among Gorkha damāi, has affinities with this one. Again, the ṭyāmko is cited as the original instrument of the damāi, and the story refers to a primeval age, before the dawn of the caste system, when everyone enjoyed equal status:

> In the beginning, there were five brahmins and each had to have a share of work. The oldest one said that they should perform a pūjā. He became a bāhun. The second one became the susāre (his helper). The third one said that they should offer a goat (bokā) to Kālikā, and said that he would cut it. He became a Magar (the jāt that sacrifices animals). They asked the youngest brother what he should do, and it was decided that he should please the deity by playing ṭyāmko. He became damāi, but all were equal (sabai eutai ho). The youngest brother made everyone happy. He walked in front of all, even before kings, and to him, first of all, food was given. Later, other work had to be shared, including jutho (unclean) tasks, and kāmi and sārki were produced.

It is noteworthy that in all these myths, playing music is not the chosen profession of the damāi, but one that has been prescribed by society. The latter story bears a remarkable resemblance to a myth of origin of the Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley, in which they claim common descent with the Gonds whom they serve as musicians. As in damāi folklore, society is represented as a single family, the members of which (in the case of the Pardhans, 18 brothers), enjoy equal status, until the youngest suffers a fall, resulting from playing music for a deity. The Pardhan, like the damāi, was dismayed to find that he had become untouchable, but material rewards were the compensation for this social condition (Hivale 1946:25-6).

Berreman noted a similar mythological rationalization of status among the low castes of Sirkanda, where folklore dispelled

> ...some of the sting of the negative associations of low status, usually by providing respectable ancestory for the caste and explaining its decline in terms of unfortunate circumstances... The blacksmiths and Bajgis (tailor-drummer-basket-makers) of Sirkanda lay claim to relatively recent but unrecognized Rajput and Brahman ancestory, respectively.
> (Berreman 1972:221)

A feature common to all these myths is the claim of common descent with the high castes whom the musicians serve. As Beidelman points out, 'when these myths show the caste to have fallen from a higher state, they also provide an argument for asserting potential equality' (Beidelman 1959:28). Myths of origin assume a prominent position in

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Prakāś Darnāl's committed argument for the common ancestry of the damāi and brāhmin-chetri jāts. He cites the uniformity of name, language, dress, life-style, religious observances and life-cycle rites as additional 'evidence' (Darnāl, P. BS.2043; unpublished).

The gāine, an untouchable caste of itinerant minstrels, claim an exhalted ancestry - that they are descendants of the gandharva, or celestial musicians (Darnāl, R.S. BS.2043b:42). Whilst the damāi claim a human ancestry for themselves, for some of their musical instruments a divine origin is claimed (see Chapter 3).

The alignment of certain occupations with specific Nepali castes dates from at least the fourteenth century, when high-caste Hindus from Rajputana fled from their Muslim invaders to settle in Nepal, bringing with them Hindu concepts of caste differentiation. With them came low-status craftspeople who introduced a range of artisan skills which were carried right across Nepal as the migrants moved eastwards and northwards to settle throughout the Himalayan foothills. As Seddon comments, the depressed groups invariably had limited access to land, so that ritual low status and poverty have always been closely related (Seddon 1979:77). In Gorkha today, the damāi land-holdings are minimal. None of the thirty households of Rānāthok, Gairigaũ and Pokharāthok have irrigated land (khet) for growing rice, and most do not have dry fields (bāri) except for the small plots immediately surrounding their homes, which, except in the case of one family, amount to under 10 muri māṭo.[1]

The relationship between caste status and occupation is by no means absolute, however, many members of the so-called 'occupational castes' working in capacities other than those traditionally designated by their caste, and the majority of artisans improving their incomes with supplementary work such as portering, farm labouring and other non-caste-related economic activities. As the Hindu castes interacted with the indigenous hill-dwelling peoples, the latter became absorbed into the middle rungs of the Nepali caste hierarchy, but these groups were never associated with any particular occupation or means of livlihood.

1. Land is measured in terms of productivity rather than acreage.

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In rural Nepal, the majority of damāi work within a traditional patronage system - bāli ghar biṣṭa - (jugi in the Terai), which is akin to the jajmāni system of India, except that in the case of Nepal, the range of services available is very limited, especially amongst the hill-dwelling communities. Within this economic framework, cash payment normally does not feature, but services rendered over the year are remunerated in kind in crops and grain after each harvest, and traditional ritual gifts given on specific occasions. Seddon believes this patronage system to have been firmly established by mid-nineteenth century, and that it was formidably rigid:

> The activities of the artisans constituted an integral part of all village economies by the mid-nineteenth century. Payment for what became specialist services, even if perhaps not originally, were now fixed locally in relation to the economic and social position in the village of the peasant household making the payment as much as to the actual labour time involved in production. The artisan was enmeshed in a complex network of social relationships which tied him to the households which customarily paid him; he was not free to work for others, once the relationship was established and perpetuated, nor was he free to alter his 'price' as in a market relationship.
>
> (Seddon 1979:78)

Today, amongst the hill-dwellers, the bāli ghar biṣṭa system embraces the occupational castes of damāi, kāmi and sārki, although the latter group have virtually lost their traditional occupation of tanning and shoemaking, due to the influx of cheap ready-made shoes and sandals from China and India. Consequently, they have lost their patrons and rely on cash payments for seasonal agricultural work and portering as their primary sources of income.

Within the bāli ghar biṣṭa system, the damāi works in his capacities as tailor and musician, and he and his family may also supply labour for seasonal field work for his patrons. As a tailor, he usually works at the house of his patron, repairing or altering old clothes as required, and making new ones on the occasions of festivals and family events, such as the life-cycle rites. As musician, the damāi acts as nāike (leader, organizer) on behalf of his patron, calling together the band, usually from the ranks of his own family. The events for which the services of a pañcai bājā may be required during the year include the

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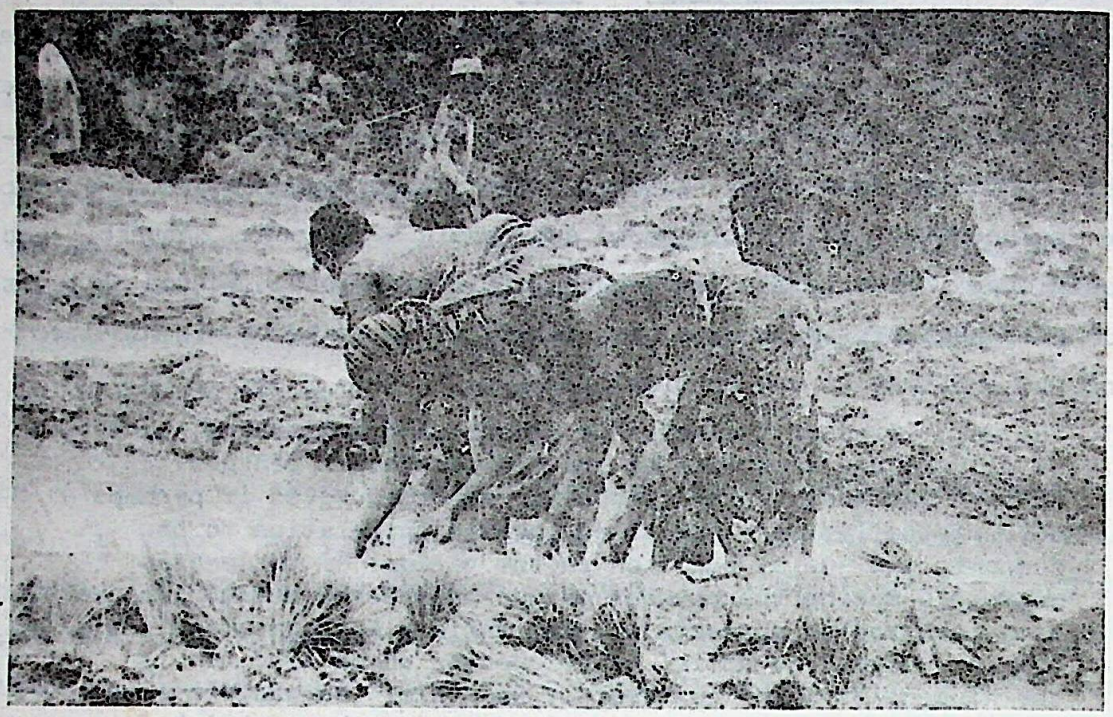

Plate 62: Damai women transplanting rice (Gorkha)

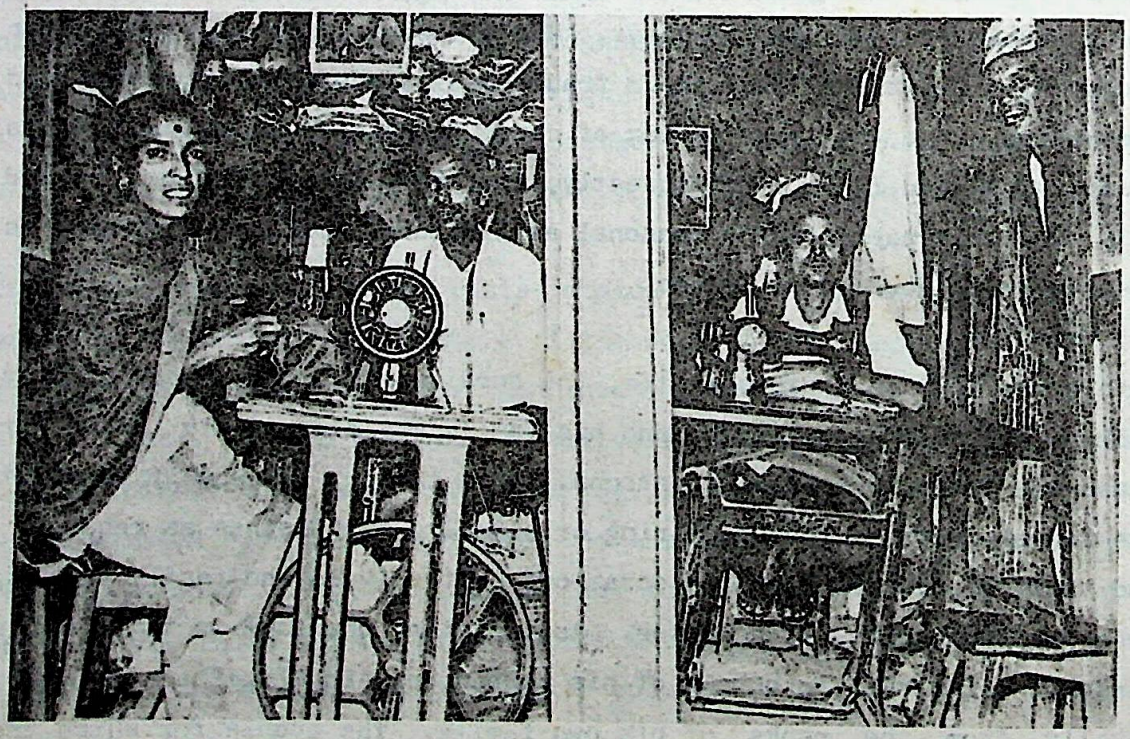

Plate 63: Tailoring workshop (Gorkha)

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life-cycle rites of the first rice feeding of a baby (pāsna), sacred thread investiture ceremony (vratabandha), marriage, and in Western Nepal, the birth of a son and funeral processions. Additionally, a band may be required for any of the patron's family pūjās, such as kul devatā pūjā, Satya Nārāyaṇ pūjā, and pañca bali (five blood sacrifices) or phūlko ḍoli (flower) offerings.

Veronique Bouillier, working in the Kabhre Palanchok district, found that the tacit contract between patron and service caste had to be renewed annually on the festival of Caite dasaĩ, when

> The craftsman has to go to his employer's house where he must be given some of the meat prepared for the family feast if the agreement is to be renewed. The craftsman has thus very few guarantees. On the other hand, a craftsman who thinks that his remuneration is not sufficient can also break off the contract by not going to his employer's house at Chaitra Dasain.
>
> (Bouillier 1977:103)

In Gorkha, this is not the case. The biṣṭa-damāi work agreement may be made or broken by either party at any time of the year. However, as at Kabhre Palanchok, Gorkha damāi do receive ritual gifts from their patrons on specific occasions corresponding with festival times. These include ṭhūlo and Caite dasaĩ, Śrāvan and Māgh saṁkranti, Tīj, and Janai purṇimā, at each of which an average share (bhāg) consists of about 450 grams (1 māna) of husked rice, a bottle of raksi (home-made spirit), 3 - 6 handfuls (muṭhi) of parched rice and the tail of any sacrificial animal, such as goat, and some vegetables. Compared with the damāi of Kabhre Palanchok, Gorkha damāi appear to receive a rather small portion. Bouillier reports that in the former district, an average share consists of 3.5kg (1 pāthi) of husked rice, 500g (2 māna) of parched rice, and the tails of sacrificial animals (Bouillier 1977: 106). Similarly, the annual payments (bāli) reported by Bouillier are double those of the Gorkha musicians:

> 1 basket (ḍoko) of maize (6 - 7kg)
> From 10 pāthi to 1 muri of paddy (from 25 to 50kg)
> 1 pāthi of wheat (3.1kg)
> 1 pāthi of millet (3.822kg)
> 1 pāthi of buckwheat
>
> (Bouillier 1977:106)

A survey carried out in the three main damāi settlements of Gorakhkāli pañcāyat - Rānāthok, Gairigaũ and Pokharāthok, totalling 34 households

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- revealed that patrons paid only 2 - 15 pāthi (5 - 37.5kg) of paddy annually, together with one or two baskets (thumse) of maize, and possibly some millet, depending on the amount of work exacted over the year, as shown in Table 2, overleaf. For each household, the number of biṣṭa relationships is given, with the annual total income in unhusked rice and maize. The maximum and minimum amount of rice paid is also given to show the range of size of payment. A family may be supported by as many as 100 patrons, but the average number is about 40. The average total income in rice is about 5.5 muri (275kg), and in maize, 14 baskets (approximately 90kg). A source of cash income for those working within the traditional system is to sell off the rice or maize which is surplus to requirement.

Apart from the formal payments due to the damāi, there are a number of obligations inherent in the bāli ghar biṣṭa system involving the exchange of gifts. Thus, when a pañcai bājā is booked for a wedding, in the first instance, the patron approaches his tailor, requesting him to act as the nāike of the band, and to seal the arrangement, he pays the nāike a pledge (bainā) - a small amount of money (e.g. Rs.10/-) - which he distributes among the prospective members of the band as a booking fee. When playing at the wedding, the whole band receives a share of the wedding feast (sagun = 'auspicious sign'), and for this reason, damāi may refer to themselves as the sagunijāt, 'auspicious ones'. The nāike is given a white turban cloth (seto pheṭā), and may also receive a gift for his wife, such as a sāri or blouse.

Traditionally, when the groom's party (janti) leaves the bride's home to take her away, her pañcai bājā accompanies the guests to the edge of her village. Here, they block the road and lay down the nāike's turban cloth or a Nepali cap (ṭopi), to beg money from the groom's father, before the party is permitted to proceed. Similarly, the damāi women of the groom's side traditionally would meet the homecoming procession and block the path until suitable payment had been made to them by the groom's father. Both these traditions have virtually disappeared in the Gorkha area today, however.

There are certain ritual obligations on the part of the nāike. Before the wedding, if he is employed by the bride's side, he must sew her

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Table 2: Annual Remuneration (bali) Paid by Biṣṭas to Gorkha Damāi (1987/88)

House	Number of patrons	Total rice in muri	Total maize in thumse	Most rice in pāthi	Least rice in pāthi
1	25	3	5	10	3
2	15	2	4	10	2
3	60	4	12	8	2
4	51	10	40	11	2
5	16	2	6	10	2
6	35	10	15	15	1
7	—	–	—	—	–
8	20	5	18	10	3
9	18	3	10	10	2
10	80	9	60	15	5
11	85	11	30	15	4
12	100	16	21	16	1
13	70	7	11	9	2
14	60	5	8	8	3
15	30	4	20	9	2
16	20	2	18	10	3
17	50	9	14	15	4
18	21	5	5	10	4
19	3	1	4	10	5
20	70	11	40	20	2
21	12	3	9	10	3
22	50	8	30	10	2
23	30	10	20	10	2
24	8	2	4	10	3
25	12	3	4	8	4
26	5	1.5	5	7	3
27	9	4	5	11	5
28	0	0	0	—	–
29	40	7	7	12	3
30	40	4	36	13	3
31	20	2	6	11	2
32	7	2	3	7	3
33	25	5	6	15	5
34	3	0.65	3	6	2

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wedding clothes, and make her a gift of a blouse or drawstring purse (thaili) which are presented with his blessing during the clothes offering ceremony (lūga chegne pūjā). In return for his blessing, the nāike receives the pūjā offerings - husked rice, various types of sweet bread, money, etc.. If the damāi works for the groom's side, he sews the clothes which are to be gifted to the bride and offers a pillow or Nepali cap to the groom.

In Gorkha, some of the younger generation expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional system of patronage, thinking it antiquated and insufficient. They are in need of cash with which to purchase all the acoutrements of modern life: radios, stereo cassette players, watches and other consumer goods. In order to realize their desires, many young damāi are abandoning the patronage system, and tailor from small workshops in the bajārs, attached to Newār cloth merchants, who pass them trade in return for a levy. The statistics of Table 2 reflect this trend - the range of households served in the traditional way ranges form 0 - 100. The lower figures, on the whole, represent the younger damāi households, who maintain a limited number of traditional biṣṭa relationships, but to varying degrees, work for cash payments in Gorkha bajār. Only one young damāi is without any biṣṭa relationships. There is an increasing trend for sons to migrate, at least temporarily, to the big towns of the Terai and Kathmandu Valley, lured by the promise of better rates for their work. In the Gorkha survey, musicians were asked whether they or their sons had ever worked outside the area, and for what reason. The statistics are presented in Table 3, overleaf. Interestingly, the reason given by older musicians was almost always that they were engaged in army or police band service, whilst that of their sons was that they were tailoring in one of the cities. When working away from their village environments, these young men usually give up playing music and concentrate exclusively on tailoring, often learning to reproduce the latest Western fashions. In the Terai towns to the south of Gorkha (eg. Nārāyaṇghāṭ and Hetauḍa), there is a notable dearth of able musicians. Thus, a groom coming from Nārāyaṇghāṭ to marry in Gorkha, and wanting a traditional pañcai bājā for his janti, had to rely on a band from the bride's locality, which travelled 10km by coach to meet the groom's party and accompany it back to the bride's house.

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Table 3: Employment Pattern and Economic Means (Gorkha 1987/88)

House	Darbār musician	Army/police service/pension	Pañcai bājā musician	Tailoring outside	Agriculture (for biṣṭa)
1	X	Gvt pension	X		X
2[1]					X
3[1]					X
4				1 son	
5[1]					X
6			X	1 son	
7	-	-	-	-	-
8	X		X	X	X
9	X			3 sons	
10	X		X		X
11			X		X
12	X		X		
13	X		X	1 son	
14			X	1 son	
15	X		X	X	X
16	X		X	1 son	
17	X		X		X
18		Army pension	X		
19		Army pension	X		
20		Army pension	X	2 sons	
21				2 sons	
22	X		X		
23		Army pension	X		
24		Ex-army[2]	X		
25					
26		Ex-army[2]	X		
27	X		X		
28	X		X	X	X
29			X		X
30	X		X	2 sons	
31		Ex-army[2]		1 son	
32		Ex-army[2]	X		
33	X		X		
34	X[3]		X	X	

1. No working males in household
2. Without pension 3. Bindya Basini temple nagarci

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In the Bhojpur area of East Nepal, the pañcai bājā tradition appears to be in an advanced state of decline. In Bhojpur bajār, the damāi work exclusively in a tailoring capacity in small workshops attached to Newār cloth merchants. Thus, there is no functioning pañcai bājā in the bajār, and the local people have to rely on the services of bands from the surrounding villages (such as Dumsika and Bukhim). Bhojpur damāi say that they have given up playing for weddings, as the returns are not commensurable with the expenditure of effort. In this area, the scattered settlement pattern and lack of roads may have been important contributory factors in the decline of the tradition. The predominantly Rāi land-owning population of the area to the north of Bhojpur bajār tend not to group their homes in communities, but to build in isolation, surrounded by their land. Wedding processions may have very long and strenuous walks over difficult paths, with few opportunities for 'refreshment' en route. Correspondingly, a damāi's catchment zone necessarily covers a wide area, and there are few openings for contracting new patrons. It is hardly surprising then, that there has been a high degree of migration to the Terai by the occupational castes, and in the case of the damāi, this has had a marked effect on the local pañcai bājā tradition. There are few experienced musicians left to serve the Bhojpur populace, the repertoire is extremely limited, and the playing techniques are impoverished; in the case of sahanai, the art of circular breathing is not employed consistently (as it is further west), and the techniques of playing ḍholaki has almost been lost completely. Two of the three local bands have dispensed with ḍholaki altogether, the ṭyāmko providing a limited amount of rhythmic interest. The music lacks the verve and vitality of the ensembles of Central and Western Nepal.

In urban settings, access to education and a heightened status consciousness amongst young damāi are also salient factors in the decline of the pañcai bājā tradition. Whilst some damāi choose to avoid the social stigma associated with the playing of the pañcai bājā instruments, conversely, others may win popularity with their peers by demonstrating an ability to play the latest film hits (at the expense of the traditional repertoire). In a limited way, as far as caste restriction allows, education opens doors to other means of livelihood.

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In their capacity as temple musicians (nagarci), providing music at shrines during daily morning and evening pūjās, for festivals and sacrifices, the damāi have hereditary land entitlements bequested to them by the temple guṭhis - land-based organizations which support the ritual activities and personnel of the temples. This is still the case at the majority of the Śivaite and Devī temples employing nagarci in the Nepalese foothills. However, at Gorkha Darbār, the Nepalese government has dispossessed the damāi of their guṭhi land, and for the past nine years has paid them a monthly salary as remuneration for their ritual duties.

In addition to their salaries, the Darbār musicians receive certain ritual gifts (bheṭi). Each aṣṭamī, Kālikā's nagarci and the pañcai bājā nāike receive a small coin[1], and at Caite and ṭhūlo dasaĩs. Masālā (turmeric and curd) is provided for the drum heads on these occasions. All twenty-four musicians receive their share of sacrificed goats' heads, together with buffalo heads at dasaĩ, and a small portion of the white sheep sacrificed at Caite dasaĩ. Of the latter animal, the darji (official tailor) gets the tail, and the nagarci, a small piece of meat cut from above the tail. The Gorakhnāth musicians receive bread (roṭ) blessed by Gorakhnāth every day.

During ṭhūlo dasaĩ, the musicians are feasted by the Darbār on two occasions. First, on mahānavamī, following the musical instruments' pūjā, and again on the last day of the festival (purṇimā), when three auspicious female singers (maṅgalinī) from the royal household in Kathmandu, who have been in attendance throughout dasaĩ, cook and serve a feast to all the personnel of the Darbār.

Traditionally, the twenty-four musicians' posts, with their attendant land (see Table 4), passed from father to son through generations. From an early age, sons accompany their fathers to the Darbār, eventually deputizing for them, and so, learn the ritual music repertoire by being steeped in it. Although at the Darbār, the old hereditary rights to

1. Traditionally, on aṣṭamīs they were paid 2 paisā and at Caite and ṭhūlo dasaĩ, 4 paisā. Today, the smallest denomination in the currency is a 5 paisā coin.

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Table 4: Gorkha Darbār Guṭhi - Land Entitlements of Musicians

Pañcai bājā	
Nāike (ḍholaki)	32 muri māṭo
Ṭyāmko	50 pathi māṭo
Damāhā	3 muri māṭo
Rāsa	3 " "
Karnāl	4 " "
Jhyāli	50 pathi māṭo
Gorakhnāth bānā	
Nagarci	18 muri māṭo
Rāsa	12 " "
Dhop bānā	5 muri 14 pāthi māṭo
Kāhal	6 muri māṭo
Karnāl	6 " "
Kālikā bānā	
Nagarci	18 muri māṭo
Rāsa	5 muri 9 pāthi māṭo
Sor rāsa	4 muri māṭo
Dhop bānā	5 muri 14 pāthi māṭo
Bijuli bānā	7 muri māṭo
Kāhal	4 " "
Sikhār	5 muri 14 pāthi māṭo
Bheri	5 " 9 " "
Karnāl	4 muri māṭo
Tallokoṭ nagarci	3 muri māṭo
Upallokoṭ nagarci	8 muri māṭo

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these posts are still honoured, in recent years a number of newcomers have been able to secure jobs there, and the off-spring of these newly-appointed personnel have no hereditary rights to their fathers' posts. Without the obligations of maintaining security of land tenure for the benefit of their descendants, sons of nagarci may be lured away by more lucrative tailoring jobs in the cities. For example, during dasaĩ, the eldest son of Kālikā's nagārā player completed his apprenticeship as nagarci by officiating at the pūjā for the ritual musical instruments on Mahānavamī, playing throughout dasaĩ, and receiving a traditional Nepali suit of clothes including cummerbund and turban, from his father. However, this young man cannot actually fulfil his duties as nagarci at the Darbār, since he is working as a tailor in Kathmandu. If the system is undermined, with established families leaving these posts and newcomers infiltrating, the ritual musical tradition itself may be gradually affected.

The damāi, together with the other occupational castes, represent the bottom of both the social and the economic social scales. In their myths of origin, the damāi acknowledge material rewards as compensation for their low social standing. Today, the remuneration is no longer commensurate. Unless the monetary returns are increased or their social status is enhanced, with the alleviation of the stigma associated with their caste profession, there will be a steady decline in the pañcai bājā tradition. It is doubtful even, whether the heartbeat of Nepal will continue to sound into the next century.

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5

THE REPERTOIRE

The repertoire of the Central Nepalese pañcai bājā is vast, including general entertainment items such as folk-songs and film tunes, auspicious context-specific items such as beulī māgne dhūn, played at weddings for the bride's departure, and astūti, played by non-ritual ensembles at shrines and to accompany pūjās, and seasonal rāgas, such as asāre, phāgu and malaśrī. The repertoire of ritual ensembles shares some of the seasonal rāgas of the popular bands, but has its own context-specific repertoire (to be discussed in Chapter 7).

Pentatonic folk-songs comprise the bulk of the popular repertoire, although there is a rich variety of more complex melodic material. Pañcai bājā music is characterized by small intervals, stepwise melodic movement and by short repetitive phrases frequently coming to rest on the tonic, which may be sounded as a drone. Two meters predominate - khyāli and jhyāure - which correspond with Western simple duple (4/4 and 2/2) and compound (6/8 and 12/8) time respectively.

The repertoire may be classified into six major genres:

1) Instrumental pieces (khyāli, jhyāure) based on varied repetitions of one (or two closely related) melodic idea(s). These are standard processional and entertainment items of repertoire.

2) Folksongs. Stanzas of the song are sung alternately with the pañcai

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bājā's rendition of it.

3) Dances. The damāi often dance to their folksong and instrumental repertoires, but there are also dance items such as cuḍka (a Gurung dance) and bhoṭeselo (a trance-dance). As with the instrumental pieces, varied repetition is the structuring principle.

4) Seasonal rāgs. Only a few seasonal rāgs (asāre, phāgu, malaśrī) remain in the current repertoire, but each of these is characterized by a unique rhythmic pattern and a distinctive melody. They are discussed in Chapter 6.

5) Auspicious items related to specific events or times of the day. Most of these items have disappeared from the repertoire. Previously, specific pieces marked various hours of the day (during the celebration of a wedding, for example), particularly at sunrise, sunset, and the half-light of morning and evening. See Chapter 6.

6) The ritual repertoire. Quite separate from the repertoires of the village pañcai bājās are those of the temple ensembles. Nagārā bānās play one item only - rāsa - and pañcai bājās have repertoires which compliment the various rituals. See Chapter 7.

The unique sound of the pañcai bājā is produced by the combination of four or five musical strata:

1) The rhythmic foundation provided by damāhā and jhyāli.
2) Rhythmic interest provided by ḍholaki and/or ṭyāmko.
3) The melodic material played on sahanai.
4) A tonic drone (sor) sounded by sahanai.
5) Idiosyncratic fanfares interpolated by narsiṅga or karnāl.

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1. The rhythmic foundation provided by two damāhā and jhyāli (Musical Examples nos. 1-4). The damāhā is the bass drum of the ensemble, providing a steady rhythmic pulse often reminiscent of the human heart-beat (Examples 1b, 2a & b, 3b).

2. Rhythmic interest provided by ḍholaki and/or ṭyāmko. The roles of ṭyāmko and ḍholaki vary from region to region. Gorkha damāi refer to the ṭyāmko as the 'jetho' (oldest brother) of the ensemble, and in eastern districts it is known as the 'gūrū' (leader), names which are explained in the damāi myths of origin (see Chapter 4). In fact, in the Gorkha area, the ṭyāmko has become the least significant member of the band. Just as pairs of sahanai, narsiṅga and damāhā are used in the pañcai bājā, ṭyāmko is paired with the ḍholaki. When played in the traditional manner, it should parallel the rhythmic patterns of the latter. However, ensembles often dispense with the ṭyāmko, as its sound tends to be obscured by the ḍholaki. When it is included, it is seldom played effectively, and makes a minimum contribution to the texture playing only repeated quavers or semiquavers (Examples 1-3) in all but a couple of traditional items of the repertoire. These older items (together with the ritual repertoire) suggest that at one time the ṭyāmko would have assumed a more prominent role in the ensemble, a supposition which is corroborated by musicians.

In the Bhojpur area, the ṭyāmko carries the primary rhythmic interest in the pañcai bājā, but this is limited to one of the few continuously repeated basic patterns (Examples 5a-c), and lacks the spontaneity and inventiveness of the ḍholaki.

In Central Nepal, rhythmic interest is provided by ḍholaki. There is a standard range of rhythmic pattern for each item of repertoire which furnishes the basis of the playing style. For the experienced ḍholaki player, however, these are merely a point of departure, and he will improvise lively and ingenious patterns spontaneously, using combinations of the playing techniques outlined in Chapter 3. Basic patterns are given in Musical Examples 1-4.

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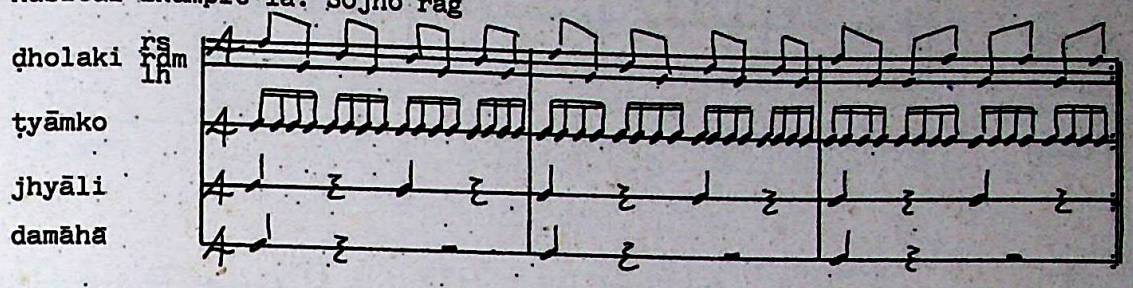
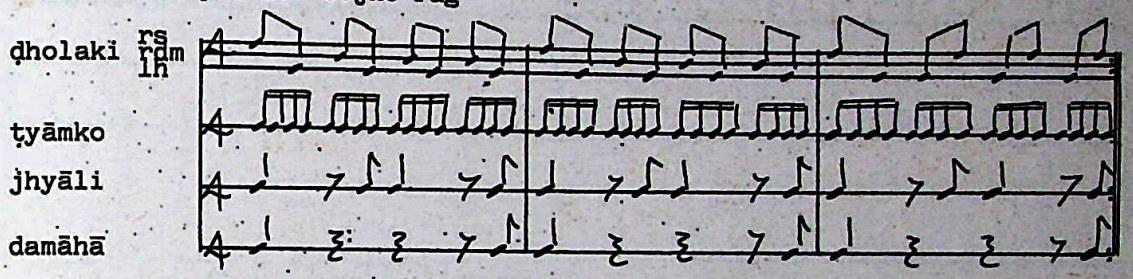
Musical Examples 1 - 4

lh = left hand; rdm = right stick dampened
rh = right hand; rs = right stick

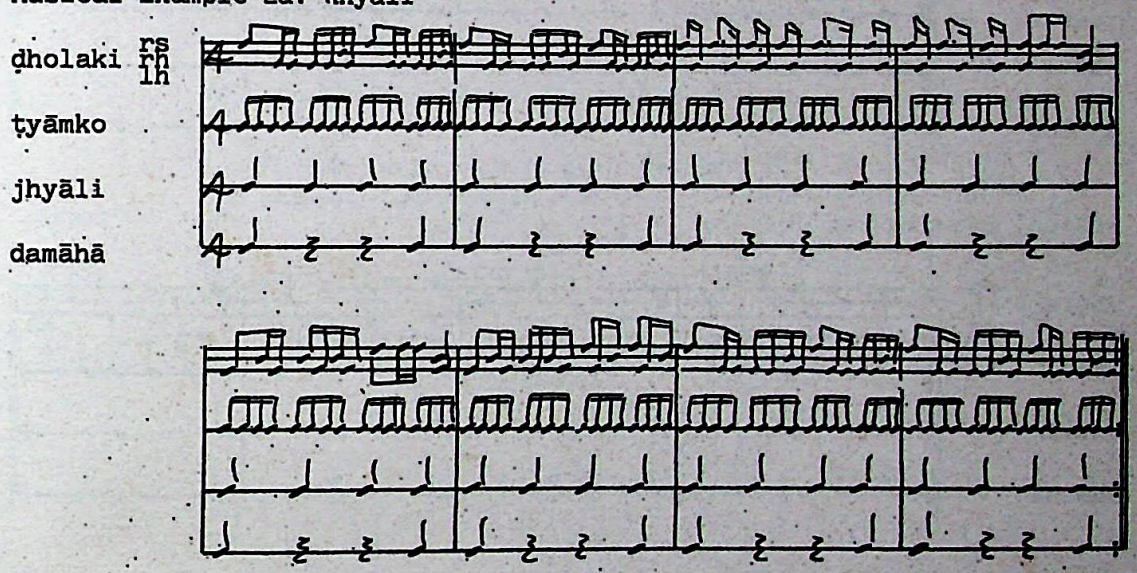
Musical Example 1a: Sojho rāg



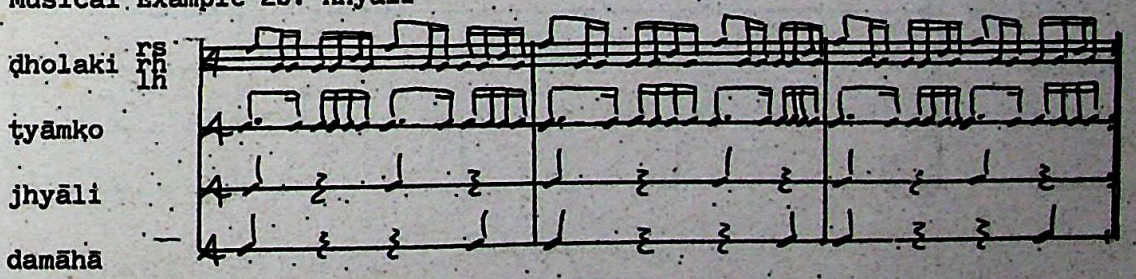
Musical Example 1b: Sojho rāg



Musical Example 2a: Khyāli



Musical Example 2b: Khyāli



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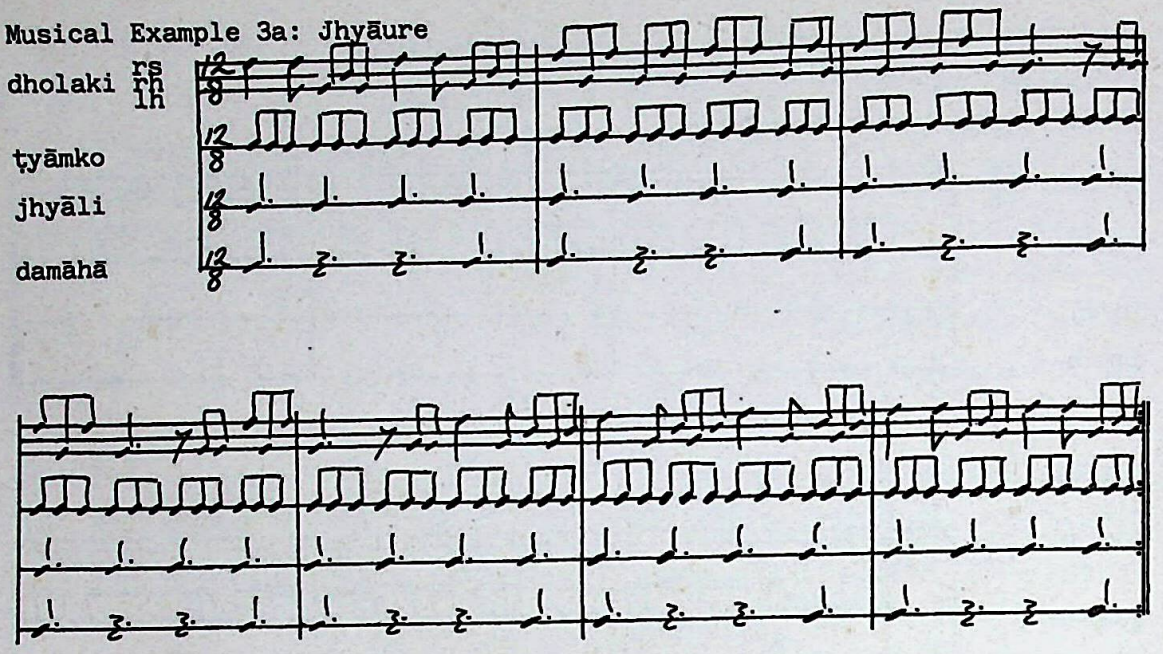
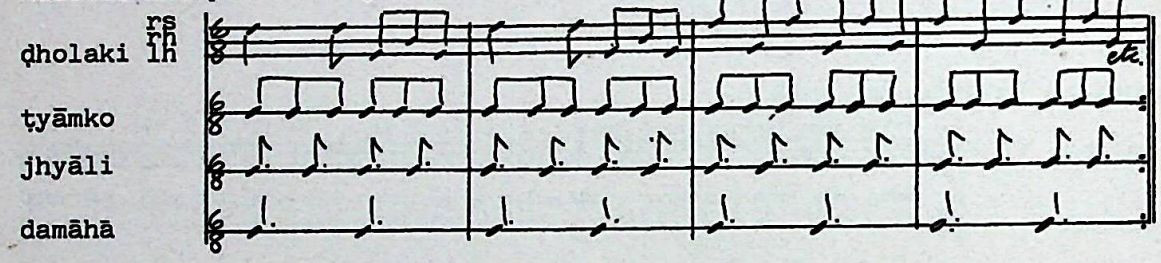
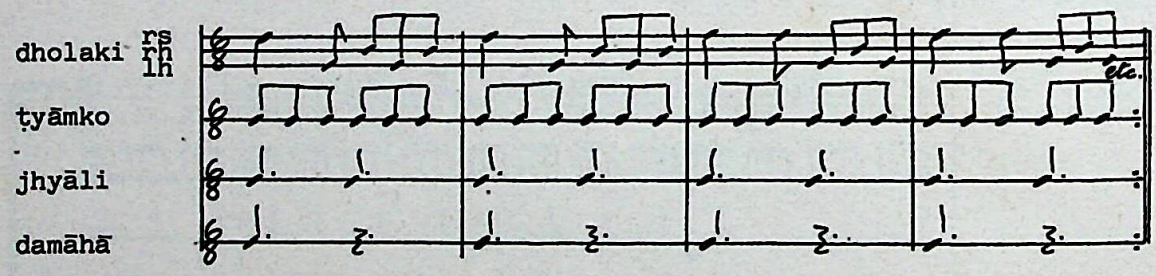
Musical Example 3a: Jhyāure



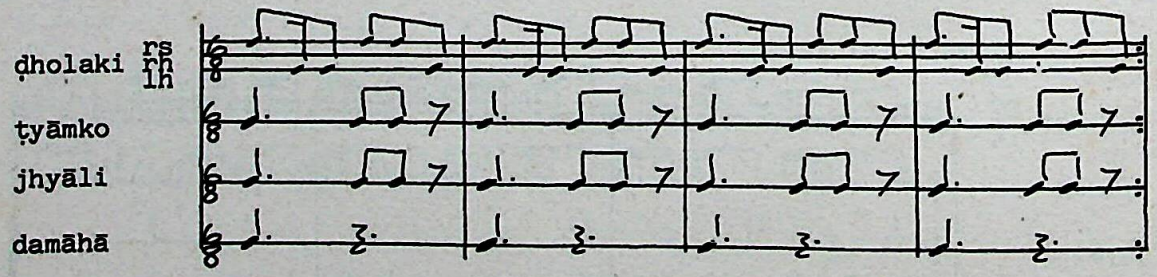
Musical Example 3b: Jhyāure



Musical Example 3c: Jhyāure



Musical Example 4: Asāre



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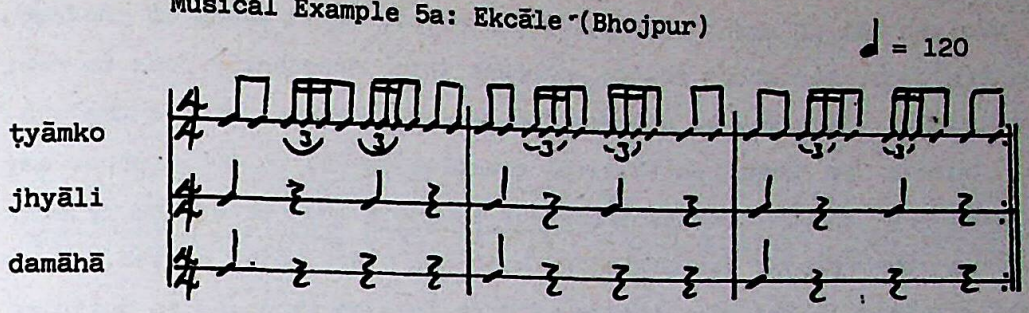
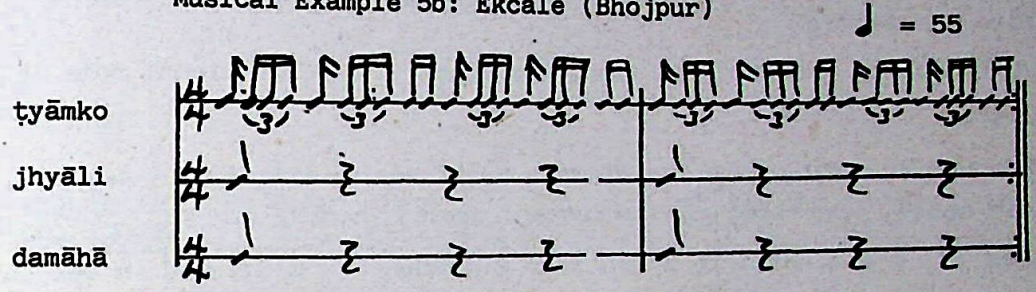
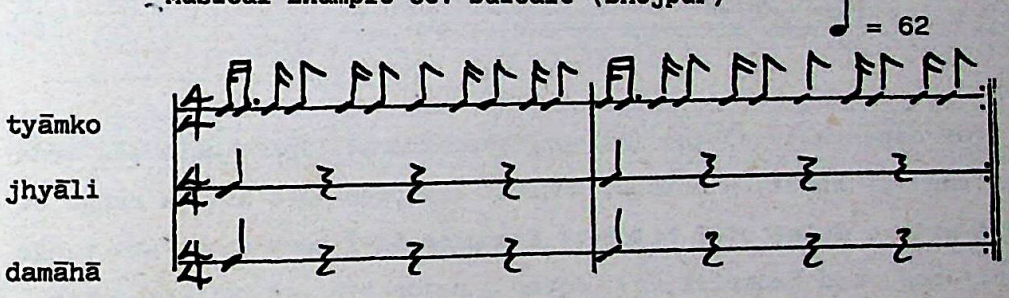
Musical Example 5a: Ekcāle (Bhojpur)



Musical Example 5b: Ekcāle (Bhojpur)



Musical Example 5c: Duicāle (Bhojpur)



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3. The sahanai is the melody instrument of the band. Ensembles usually employ two sahanai in order to amplify the sound. Most items of the repertoire are comprised short melodic phrases which frequently come to rest on the tonic, which may be sounded for several measures before the subsequent phrase is commenced (Musical examples 6a-k). A tonic drone may be sounded by the second sahanai (sor sahanai), but this usually only happens is the player is unfamiliar with the piece being played. This provides a means of learning the repertoire from an experienced musician for young players.

The melodic material may be classified into four basic types:

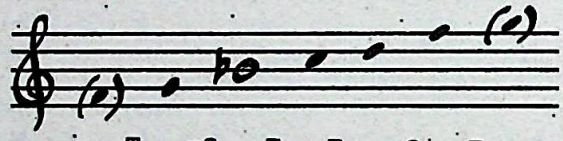
a) Simple pentatonic.

b) Pentatonic in ascent with two (occasionally one) additional note in descent.

c) Modes corresponding with the Western major scale, and with Western church modes, particularly dorian and aeolian modes.

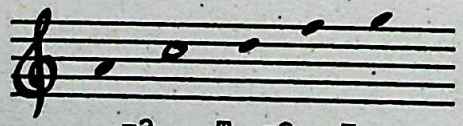
d) Scales (5, 6 & 7 note) in which 1 or 2 pitches are flattened in descent.

a) A large proportion of the popular repertoire is based on the pentatonic scale, comprised whole tones and minor thirds:



T m3 T T m3 T

This is true especially of the folksong repertoire. These melodies tend to have a range of about an octave: Musical examples 6a-c have a range of a minor 7th with a total of 5 pitches; Examples 6d-f have an octave range with 6 pitches, and Examples 6g-j cover a major 9th and utilize a total of 7 pitches. The tonic is always approached from the minor 3rd below or the tone above, and this is still the case in Example 6k, despite the inverted form of the scale:



m3 T m3 T

The melodies are characterized by stepwise movement, (i.e. between adjacent pitches). Occasionally there are leaps of a perfect 4th or 5th, but wider intervals are extremely rare.

A simple pentatonic melody may be ornamented with notes exogenous to the

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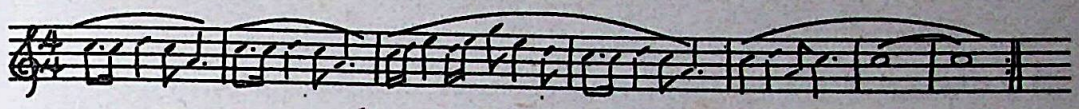
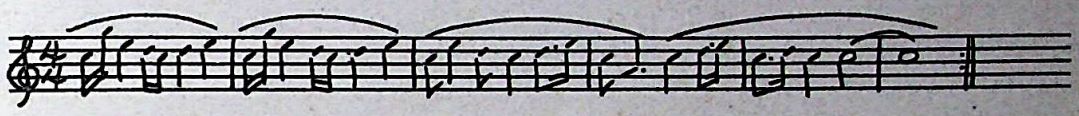
Musical Examples 6 a - k: Pentatonic melodies (Gorkha)

a) Khyāli

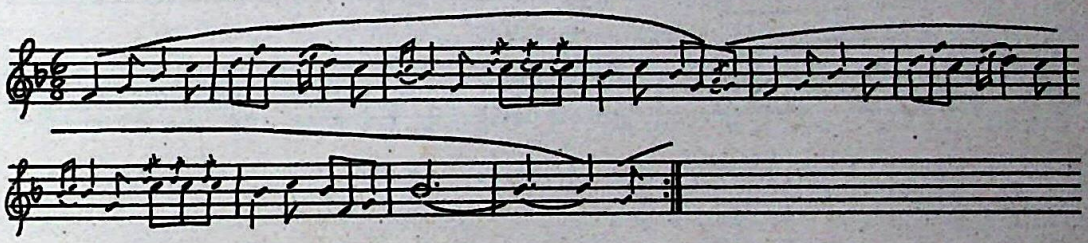
b) Folksong: Laṛake jobana (khyāli)



c) Khyāli

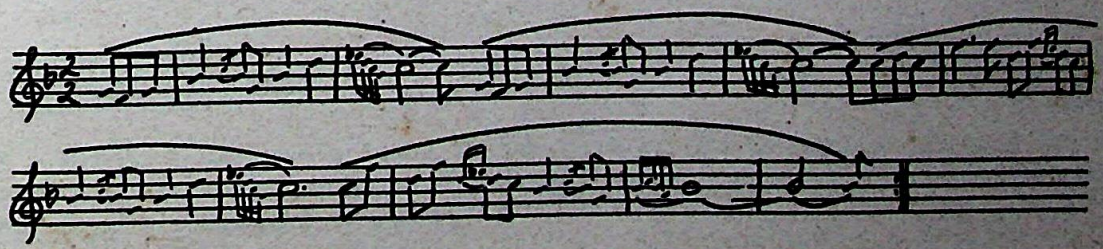


d) Folksong: Niramaya (jhyāure)



e) Jhyāure

f) Khyāli



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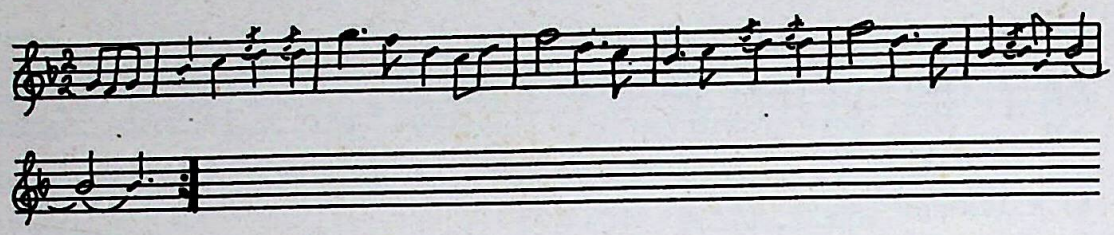
Musical Examples 6a - k continued

g) Khyāli

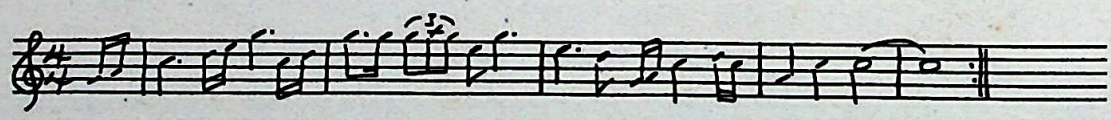


h) Folksong: Niramaya (khyāli)

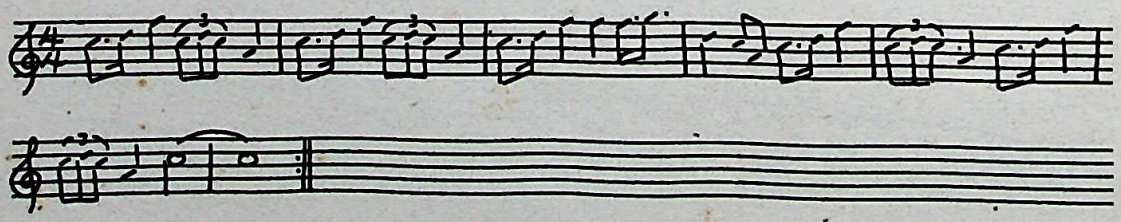
h)

i) Cudki

j) Khyāli



k) Khyāli



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scale, as in Musical examples 6d, f, g and i. The upper neighbour note used as a grace note and the turn are the most common forms of ornamentation. The ornamentation of a repeated note is a means of re-articulating it, since tonguing is not employed. Breath control is used for this purpose, a small increase in air pressure serving to re-articulate. In this context, players say that it is essential for a melody to be 'in the mouth as well as under the fingers', but this may also refer to memorization.[1]

b) More complex melodic material is also found. An essentially pentatonic melody in ascent may have an additional one or two notes in descent as in the khyāli melody of Example 7, in which the perfect 4th and major 7th above the tonic are the additional notes, and in the makhyāli cuḍke dhūn of Example 8, in which the major 7th above the tonic is added in descent. The latter is an example of the outstanding virtuosity of some sahanai players, the melody covering a range of two full octaves.

Similarly, the khyāli of Example 9 is pentatonic in the ascending scale, becoming octotonic in descent, the additional notes being the minor 3rd, major 6th and major 7th above the tonic. In Examples 10 and 11, the melodies have a distictly pentatonic flavour, despite the addition of a sixth note a semi-tone below the tonic. In descent, a perfect 5th above the tonic is added to Example 10, and an augmented 4th above the tonic of Example 11, so that they are both heptatonic in descent.

Example 12 is an interesting example of this type of scale. Two melodic ideas (a and b) comprise this rateuli. The material of 'a' is based on a pentatonically ascending scale, from which the tonic note (E) is absent, as it is always approached from above. The tonic and the augmented 4th above it are added to the descending form of the scale, making it heptatonic. This corresponds with the Western hypolydian mode.

1. cf. Hindī - to have a 'song in the throat' (kaṇṭh hst) = 'to know it by heart' (Richard Widdess: personal communication). and in Nepali, kaṇṭhāgra = committed to memory.

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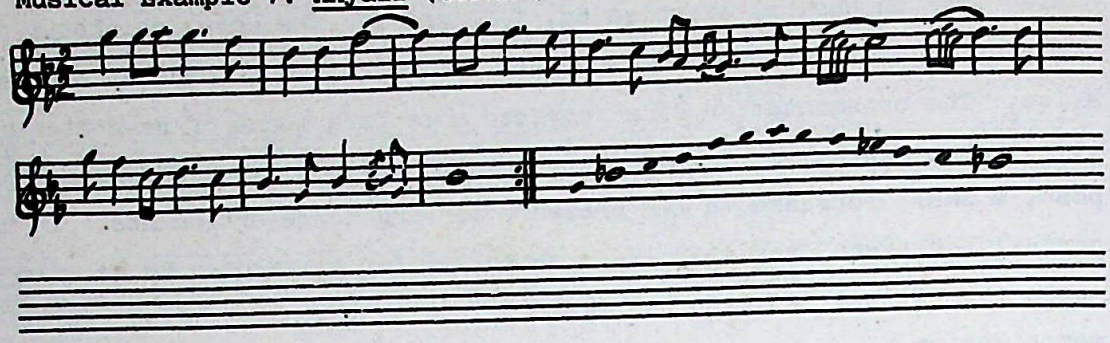
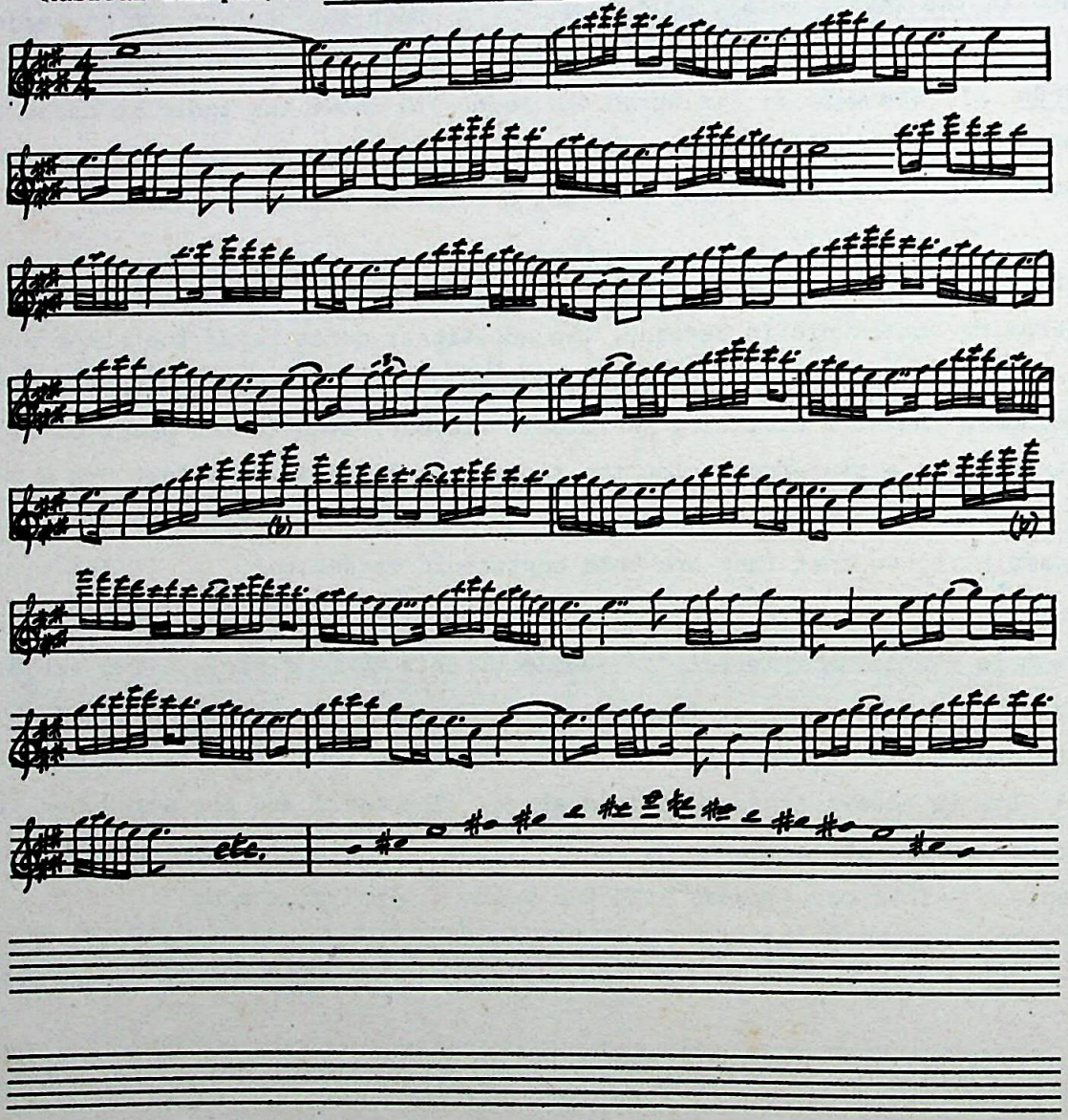
Musical Example 7: Khyāli (Gorkha)



Musical Example 8: Makhyāli cuḍki dhūn (Bageswari)



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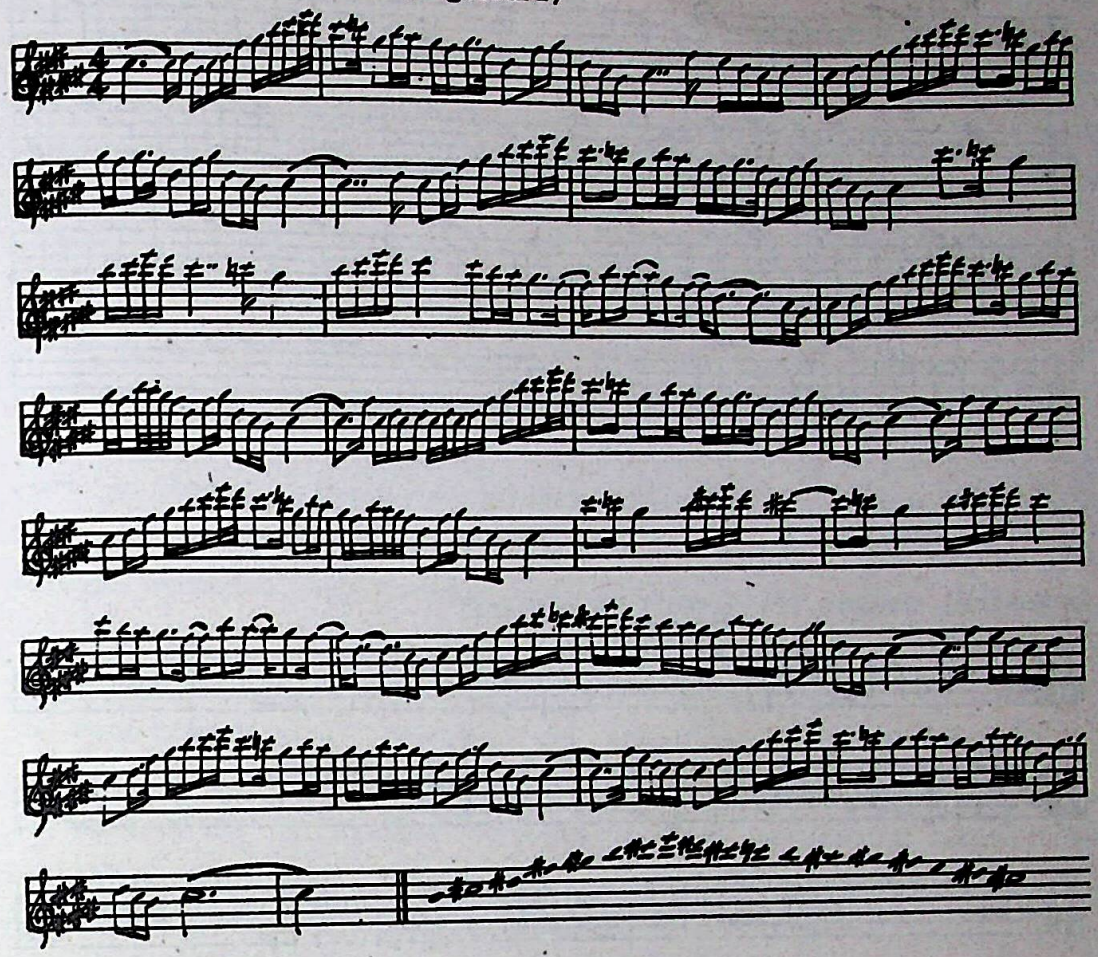
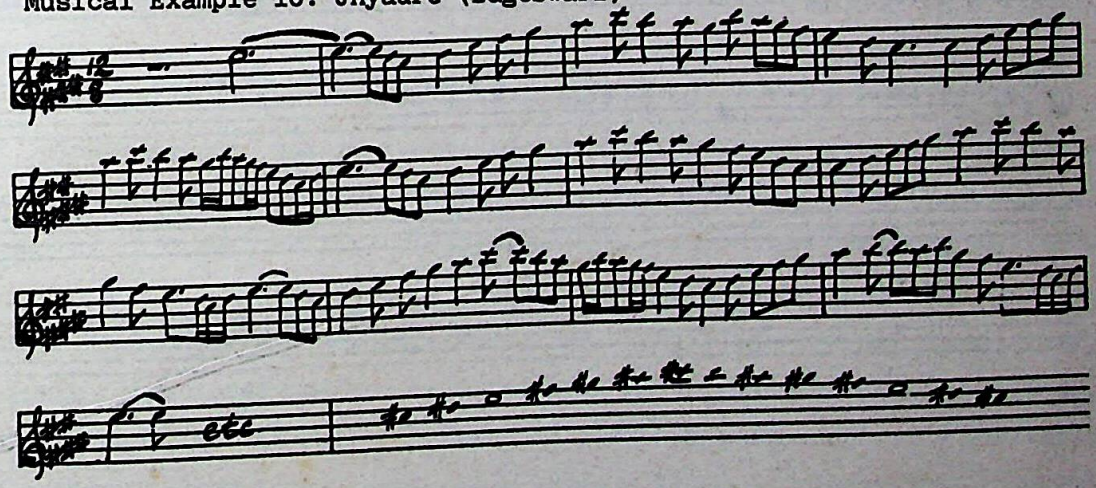
Musical Example 9: Khyāli (Bageswari)



Musical Example 10: Jhyāure (Bageswari)



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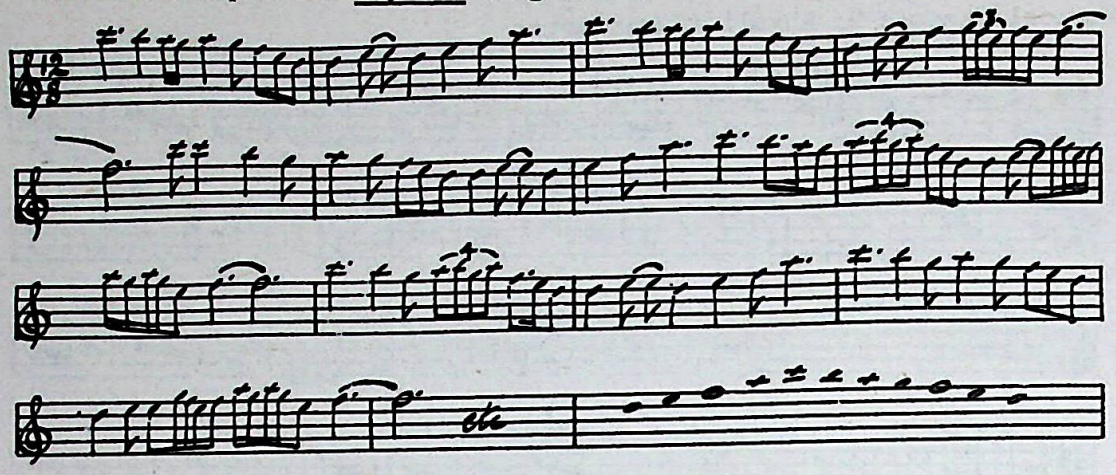
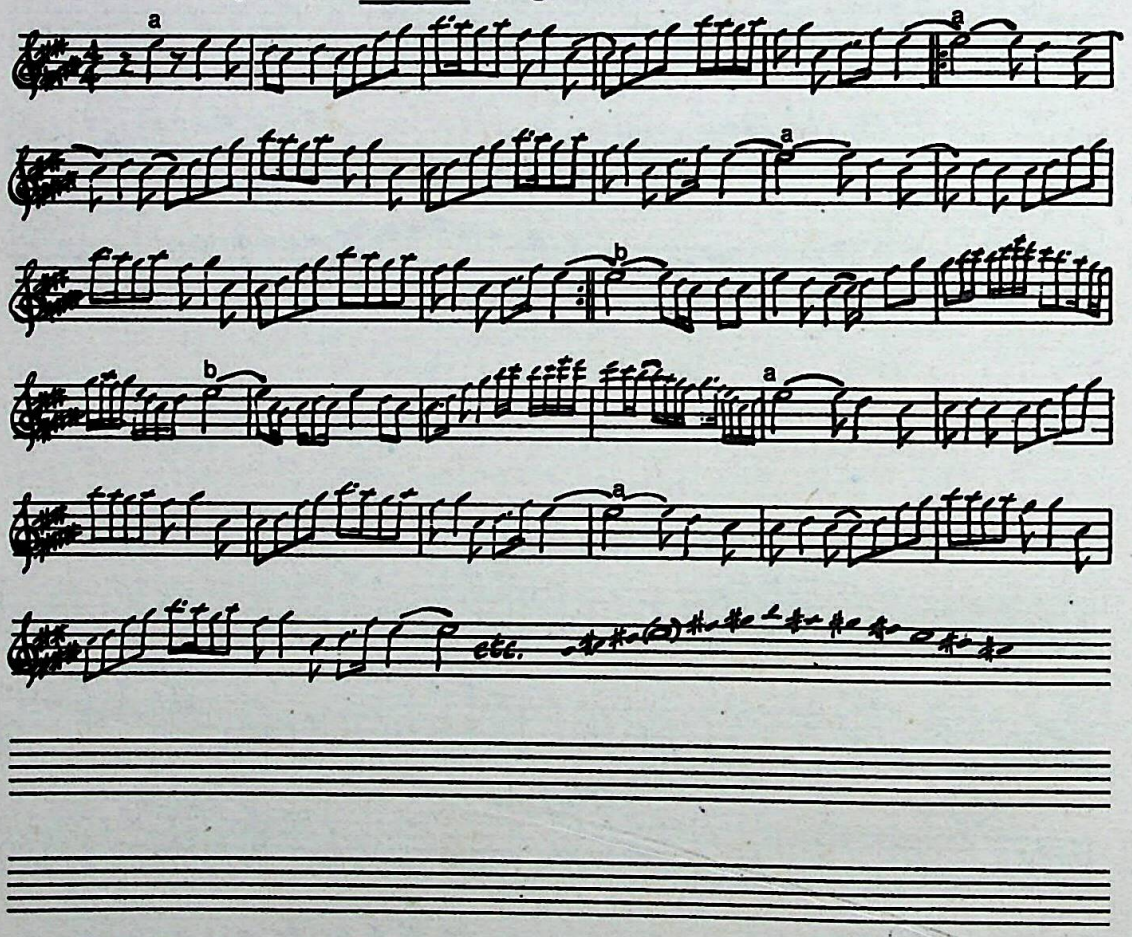
Musical Example 11: Jhyaure (Bageswari)



Musical Example 12: Rateulī (Bageswari)



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c) Musical modes that correspond with the Western major scale or with Western church modes are not infrequently found, dorian and aeolian modes being the most common of these. Examples 13 and 16 are both based on modes which are heptatonic in ascent and descent and correlate with the dorian mode. The musical mode of Example 14 corresponds with the Western major scale.

d) Examples 15 and 17 are based on a more complex heptatonic musical mode. In both pieces, the 4th and 7th degrees are sharpened by a semitone in ascent and are correspondingly flattened in descent.

Form is based primarily on the principle of varied melodic repetition, and secondarily on the idea of melodic contrast. Repetitions of the melodic material may undergo variation, depending on the inventiveness and musicality of the performer. In the performance of folksongs variation tends to be minimal, the musicians usually sing and play stanzas of the song alternately. However, the traditional instrumental music - khyāli and jhyāure - is characterized by structured varied repetition. In the khyāli of Example 16, a melodic idea is repeated twelve times, either with an initial extension (A) or a succeeding one (B). Extension A is centred on the upper register tonic, and B on the lower register tonic. The paired phrases comprise an overall structure of A-B-B-A-B-B. Whilst the melodic kernel appears in a 13-beat form in phrase A and cadences on the first beat of the bar, for phrase B, it is augmented to 14 beats, and cadences alternately on the third and first beats of the bar. Several motifs within the melodic kernel itself appear in a variety of transformations, as shown.

In other pieces varied repetition is combined with melodic contrast as the structuring principle. In the rateuli (Example 12) the first musical idea (A) is presented five times with little variation before a contrasting idea (B) appears twice. These seven phrases are repeated, and two presentations of A conclude the piece. Thus, the overall form is very clearly structured and may be summarized as Ax5-Bx2-Ax5-Bx2-Ax2. In the maṅgal dhūn of Example 17, pairs of 2-bar phrases comprise a perfectly balanced ternary form: A-B-A-B-A - C-D-C - B-A-B-A. Additional interest is provided by the constant variation of the motifs of phrase A.

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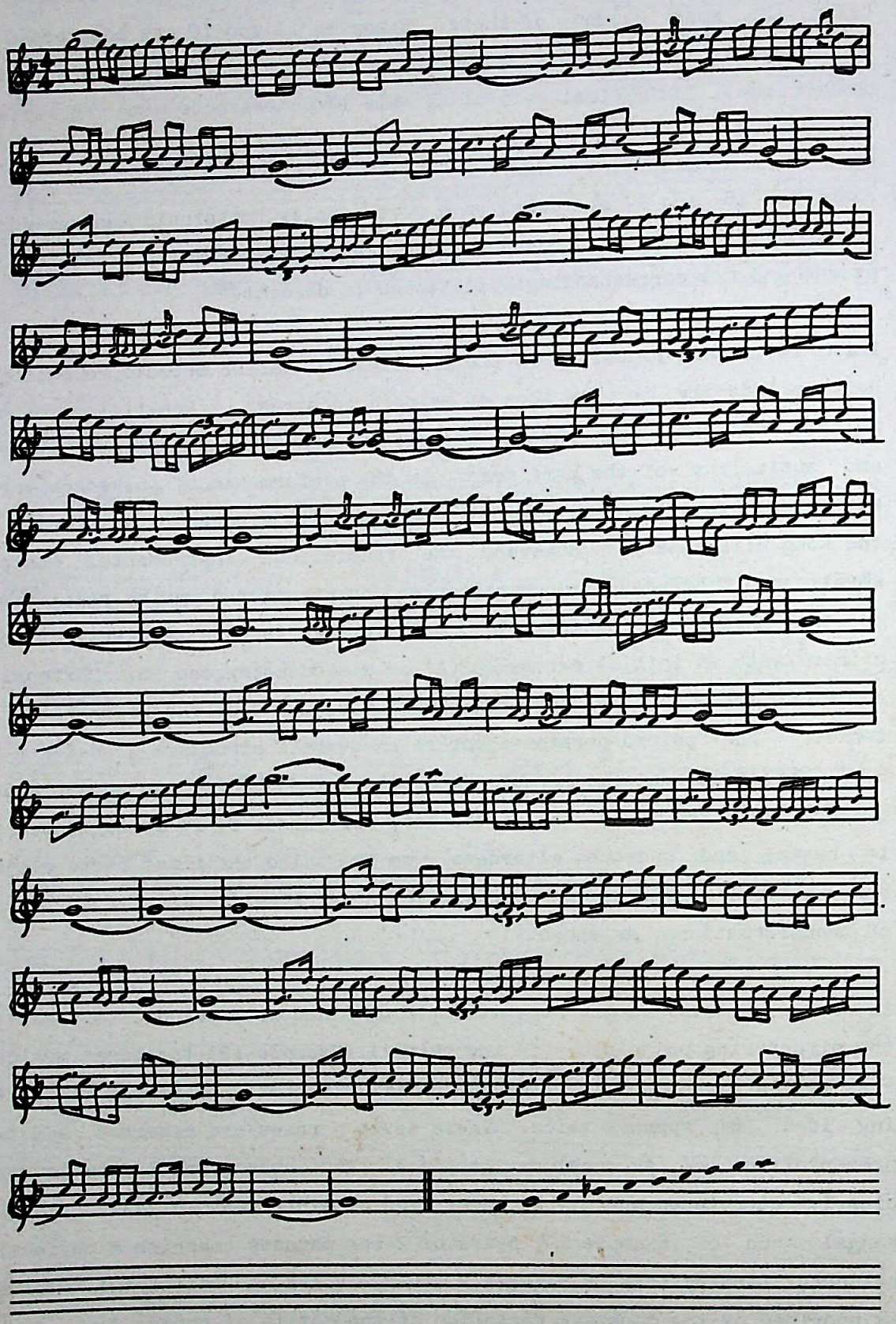
Musical Example 13: Khyāli (Gorkha)



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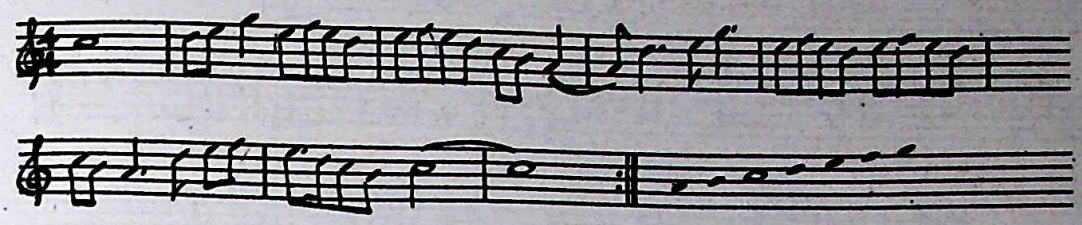
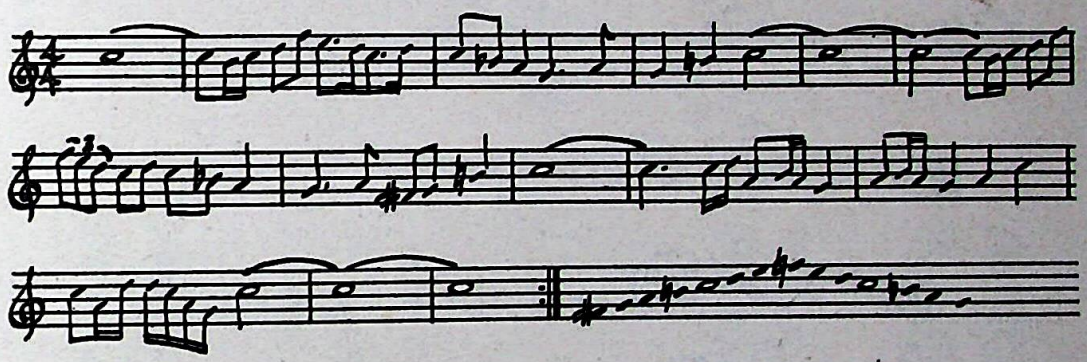
Musical Example 14: Khyāli (Gorkha)



Musical Example 15: Khyāli (Gorkha)



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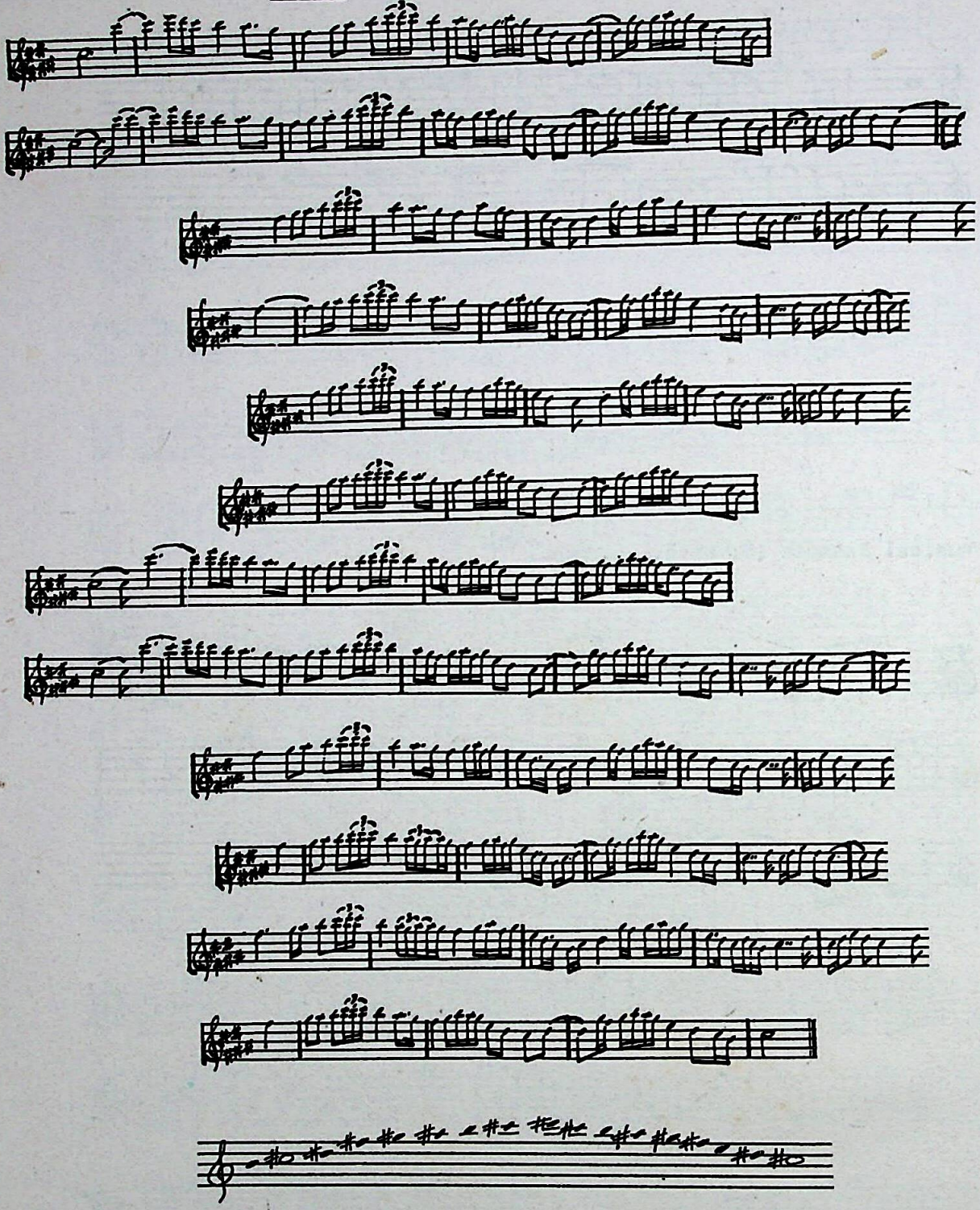
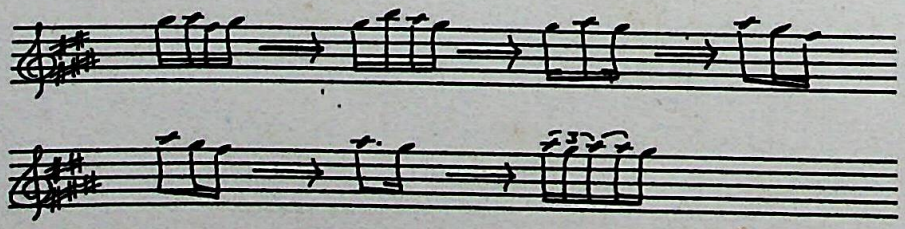
Musical Example 16: Khyāli (Bageswari)



Transformations of motivic cells:



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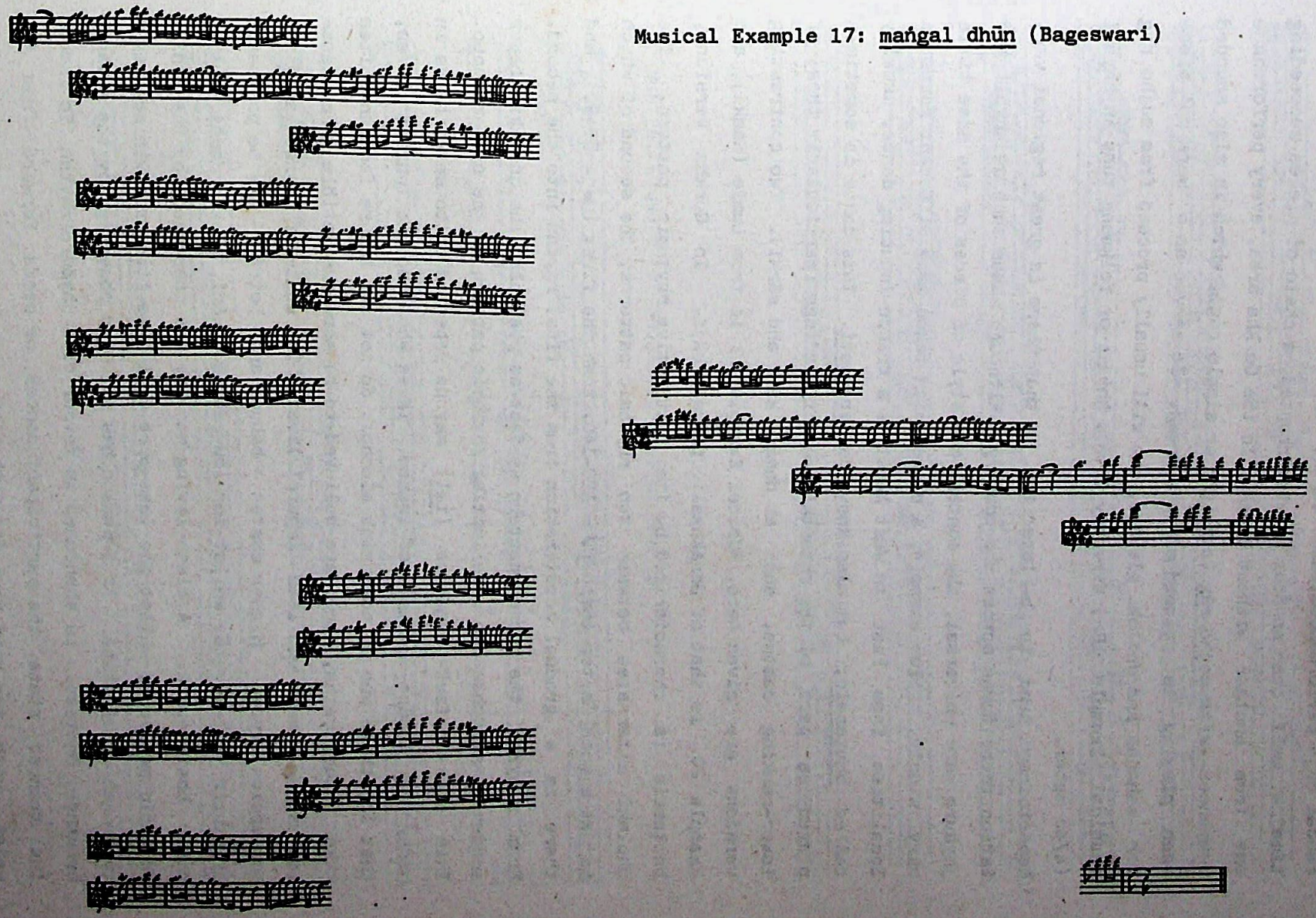
Musical Example 17: <u>maṅgal dhūn</u> (Bageswari)



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Pañcai bājā performances, once begun, may continue for long periods of time - well over an hour - uninterrupted, a chain of pieces succeeding one from another without break. In the Gorkha area, every performance commences with sojho rāg (straight or simple rāg), which is also sounded when playing is resumed after a break. It serves as a 'warm up' piece for sahanai and ḍholaki players, who will usually proceed from sojho rāg (Musical Example 18) directly into a khyāli or folksong tune in khyāli (4/4) meter.

Repertoires tend to be localized, so that there is great regional variation to be found across the country. Although names such as khyāli and jhyāure are universal, the content and style of pieces of the same title vary widely. For example, a piece which takes many different forms in localities from East to West Nepal is a trance-inducing dance, usually called bhoṭeselo, but also known as Saraswati. This dance is sometimes played as part of the entertainment at weddings (particularly those of lower-ranking castes, such as damāi, kāmi and sārki). Two contrasting versions are given here, Musical Example 19 is from Lumle (Kaski), and Example 20 is that of Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā. In Gorkha versions, bhoṭeselo is characterized by its distinctive rhythmic pattern. The ḍholaki alternates between two rhythmic patterns, the second of which is at a much faster tempo (♩ = 120-140) than the first (♩ = 80-90), and there is a gradual acceleration from the first rhythm into the second. From playing the second pattern as fast as possible, the ḍholaki player suddenly switches to the initial rhythmic pattern at the slower tempo. This slow-to-fast sequence (tāl) may be repeated up to seven times in order to induce a state of trance. Those who lead the 'purest' lives, that is, those who do not drink alcohol, do not eat impure food and often take ritual baths, etc., are believed to be more susceptible to possession than those who lead 'impure' lives. The state of trance is of the possession type. Higher castes - bahuns and chetris - may be possessed by their kul-devatā, whilst for low castes - kāmi, sārki, damāi - it is their bhai-devatā. A clean-living man may be possessed by the third rhythmic sequence, whilst the less-pure will take five or seven sequences to reach that state. If a person has not been possessed by the seventh sequence, bhoṭeselo is abandoned in favour of a jhyāure rhythm. To induce the tranced state, the participant dances, or bends forward from the waist, with the head down and with fists clenched, and shakes the whole of his body vigorously (Plate 64).

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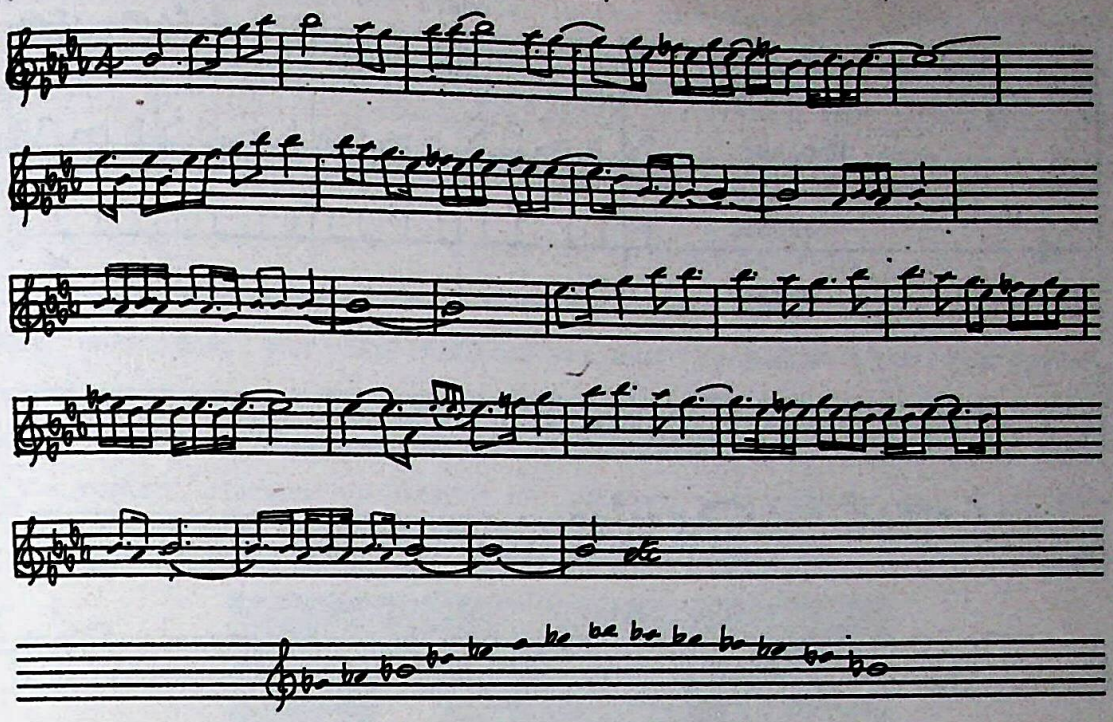
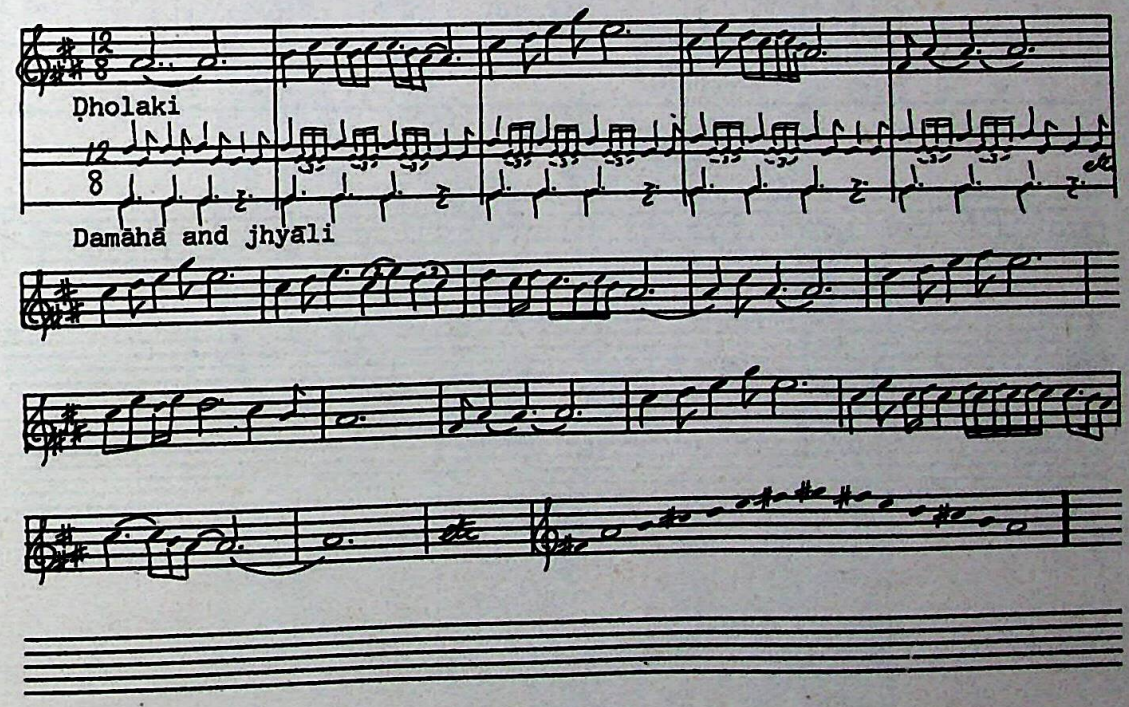
Musical Example 18: Sojho rāg (Gorkha)



Musical Example 19: Bhoṭeselo (Lumle, Kaski)



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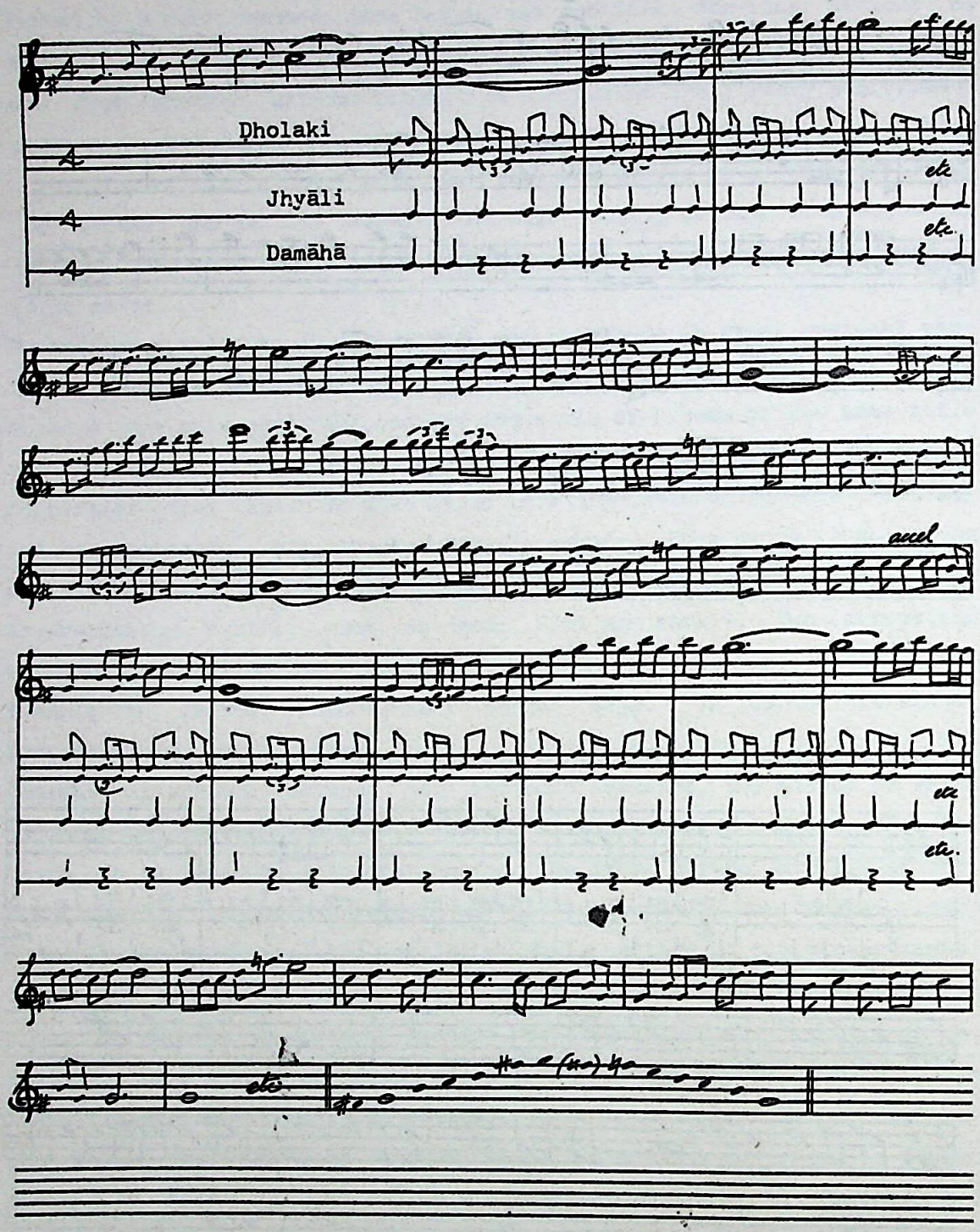
Musical Example 20: Bhoṭeselo (Gorkha)



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Some village or district pañcai bājās may have items of repertoire which are peculiar to them. For example, in the repertoires of pañcai bājās of villages lying immediately west of the Darauṇḍi River (eg. Choprāk), a popular item is the paltan nayā bākya (new/modern army tune) which is played frequently in preference to jhyāure and khyāli (Musical Example 21). It is thought that this piece was introduced into the repertoire by recruits returning home from service in the army band.

Not only does one find regional variation in pañcai bājā repertoires, which will include the local folksongs and will have absorbed some of the flavour of musics of the ethnic groups living in the area, but within a region, players' renditions of items may vary considerably, reflect-

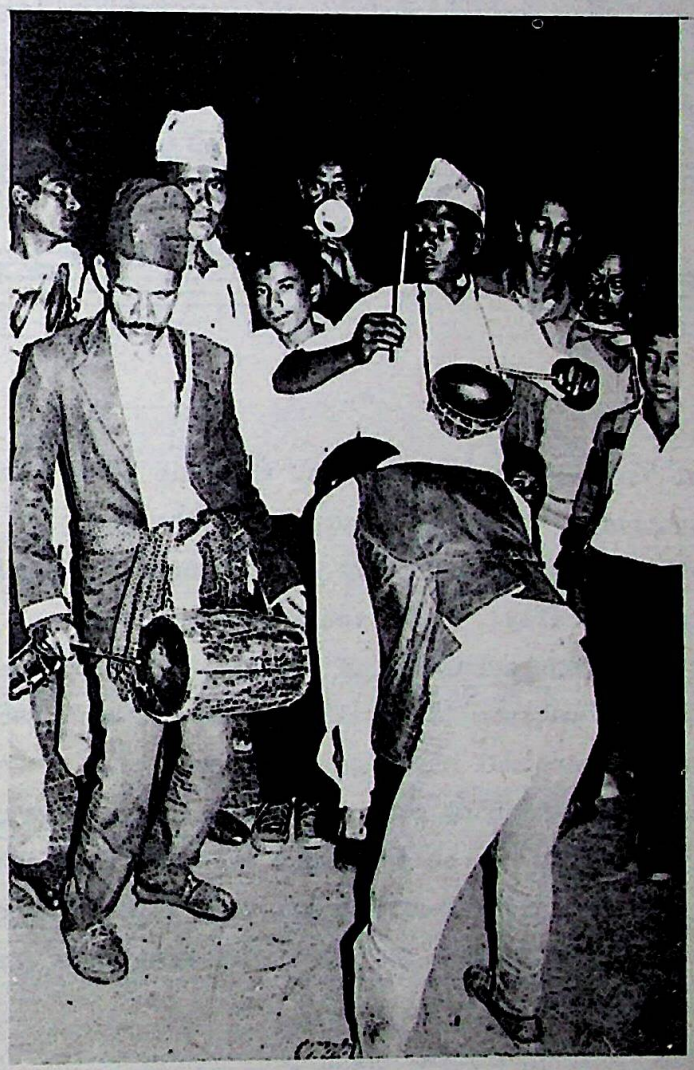

Plate 64 : Bhoṭeselo trance-dance (Gorkha)

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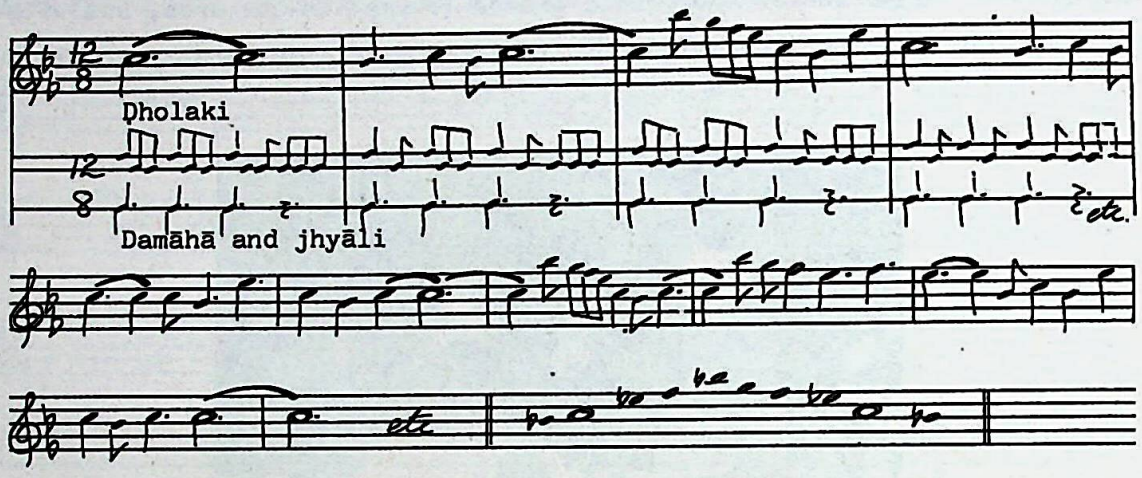
ing the reliability of memories and the musicality and skill of the individual sahanai player. The folksong Marsyaṅgdi salala (or panko pat) provides an example of variation within the Gorkha area (Musical Examples 22 a - e). In 1987-88 this was one of the most popular folksongs of the Gorkha district, which was sung by women in the fields, as an entertainment item by damāi, and commercial recordings of which could often be heard blasting from cassette players in the Bajār.

Musical Example 21: Palṭan nayā bākya (Choprāk, Gorkha)



5. In Central Nepalese pañcai bājās, the role of the narsiṅgas is to insert idiosyncratic fanfare figures into the musical texture. The narsiṅgas are always played in pairs and if there are more than two, the pairs play antiphonally. The fanfare-like insertions are invariably built around the four harmonics of the series, h6-h9, but still, there is great variety of pattern (Musical examples 23 a-d). Pañcai bājās tend to have their own personal narsiṅga calls, and thus, it should be possible to identify a band by its narsiṅga playing, although outstanding narsiṅga players tend to be in demand over a wider area, and may play with several bands. Some Gorkha damāi were able to recognize bands of the immediate vicinity in this way, but this knowledge was not shared by the population at large.

The narsiṅgas usually play in time with the band (i.e. in jhyāure or khyāli time), but operate independently, inserting phrases leisurely

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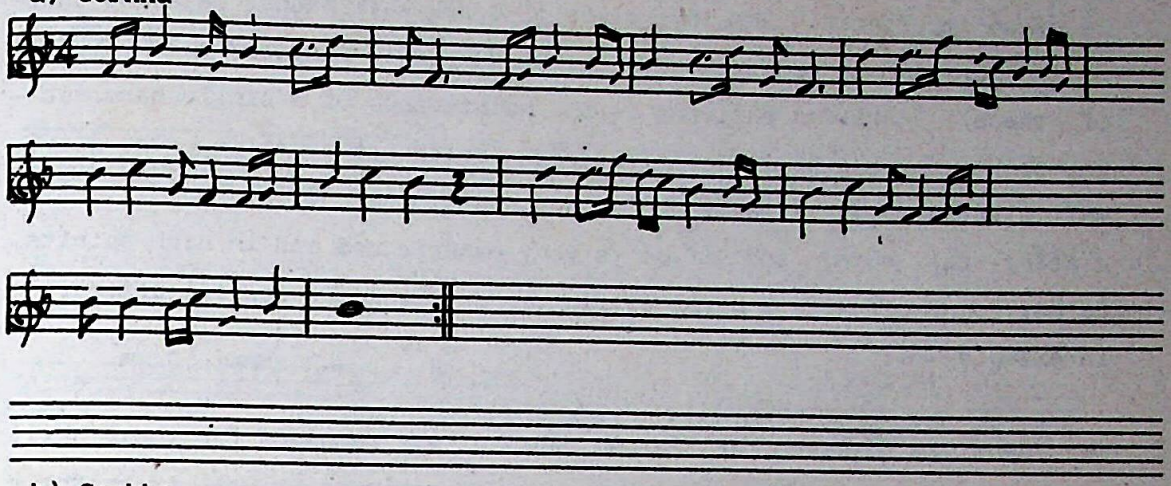
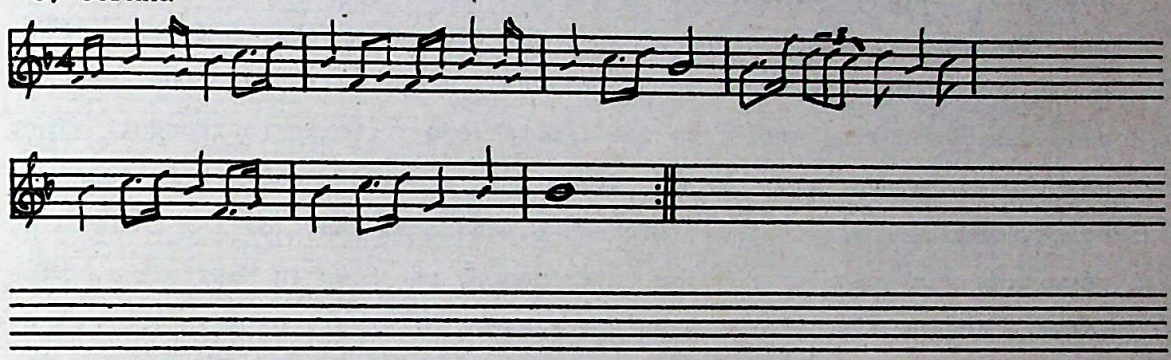
Musical Example 22: Folksong: Marsyaṅgdi salala (panko pat)

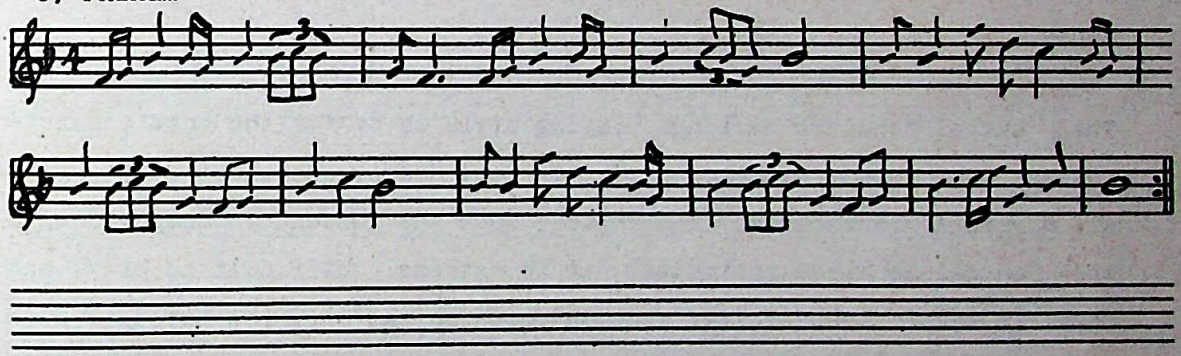
a) Gorkha



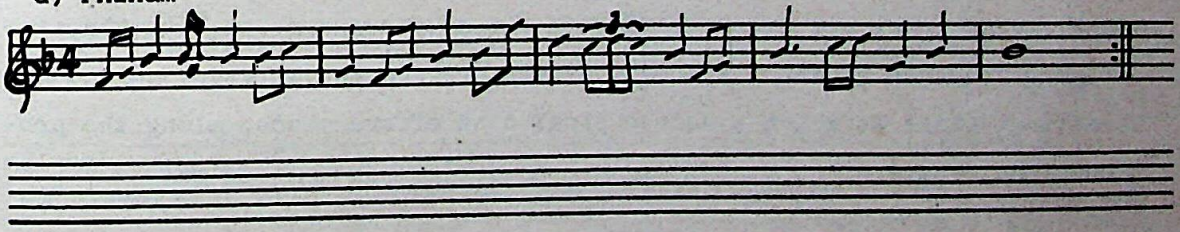
b) Gorkha



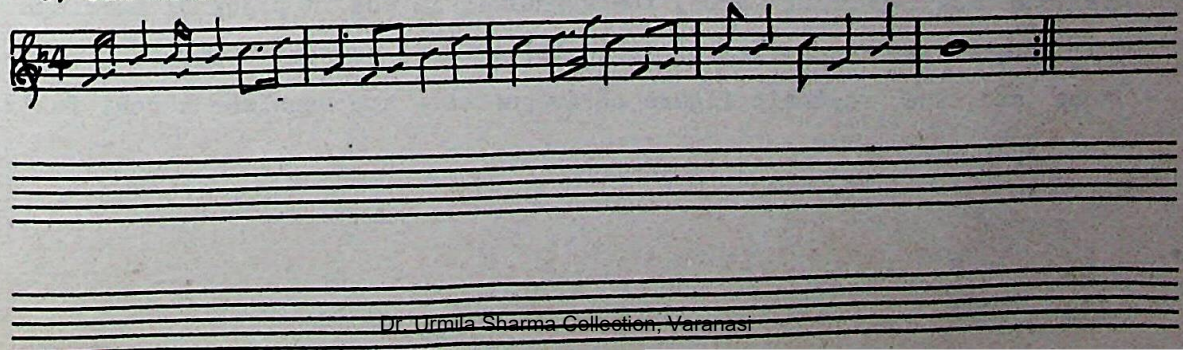
c) Phinām



d) Phinām



e) Tin Mane



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between cigarettes. The fact that they are not in tune with the sahanais is of no importance. Narsiṅga calls of Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā and those of the surrounding villages are given in Musical examples 23a-d. Typical of these narsiṅga patterns is the maintenance of a single harmonic - h6 or h7 - over a period of time, with varied articulation. The player may alternate between (a) sounding and sustaining and (b) rapidly articulating the note, and if he is very experienced and in high spirits, he may round off with a burst of flutter tonguing for special effect, as in example 24c.

The narsiṅga players of Phinām pañcāyat are renowned for their skill and are in great demand in Gorkha and its environs as well as in their own village. Apart from playing the basic fanfare figures, these musicians have expanded their repertoire by imitating the sahanai melodies, adapting them to the limitations of their instrument. They may 'play along' with the melody, either simultaneously or in counterpoint, and usually at a different pitch from that of the sahanais, resulting in some interesting heterophony, as shown in Musical examples 24a-c. Frequently, Phinām narsiṅga players alternate between the melody of the moment and their basic fanfare call, giving very lively performances.

The Central Nepalese narsiṅga playing style is by far the most sophisticated to be found in the country. In East Nepal, the short fat variety of narsiṅga imposes many limitations upon the musician. Compared with the Central Nepalese instrument, it is extremely difficult to play, and thus, it merely issues brief raucous cries on two or three pitches (such as a, b and c# above the treble stave). If several narsiṅgas are in use, their cries are not co-ordinated - each plays more or less the same figure in free rhythm. Piercing blasts are sounded at every shrine and resting place at which a sacred pipal tree offers shade, along the processional route.

In the Kaski-Baglung area, the karnāl is in use in place of narsiṅga. Of Baines' two categories of 'oriental trumpet sounds' - the long monotone and the rhythmic figure on two notes - the Nepalese karnāl falls

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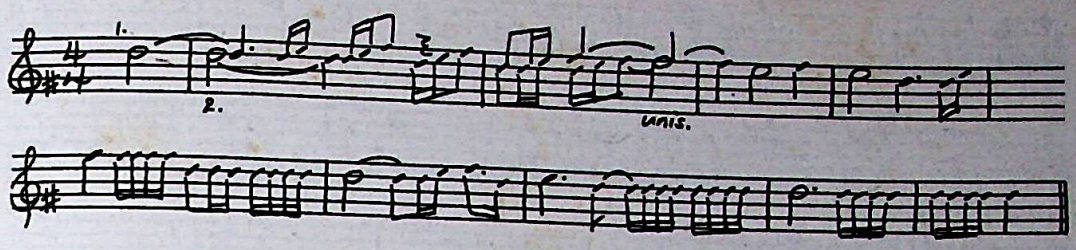
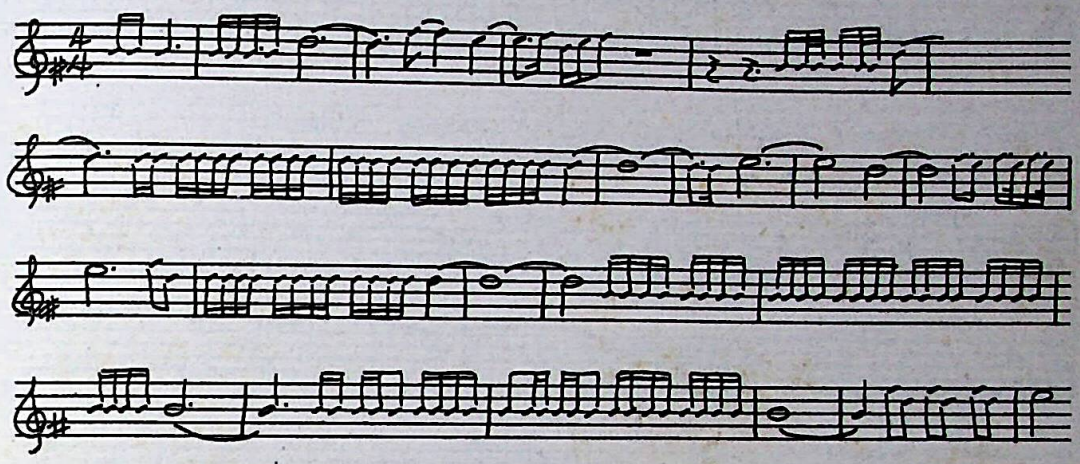
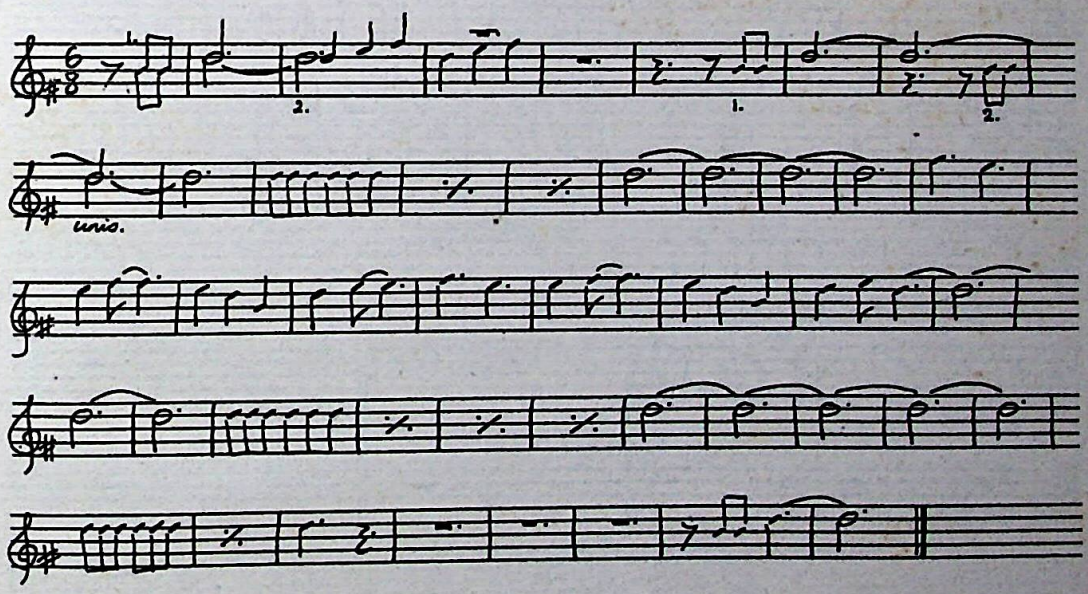
Musical Example 23a: Narsiṅga call (Tallo Kokhe, Gorkha)



Musical Example 23b: Narsiṅga Call (Lakṣmī Bajār, Gorkha)



Musical Example 23c: Narsiṅga call (Tin Mane, Gorkha)



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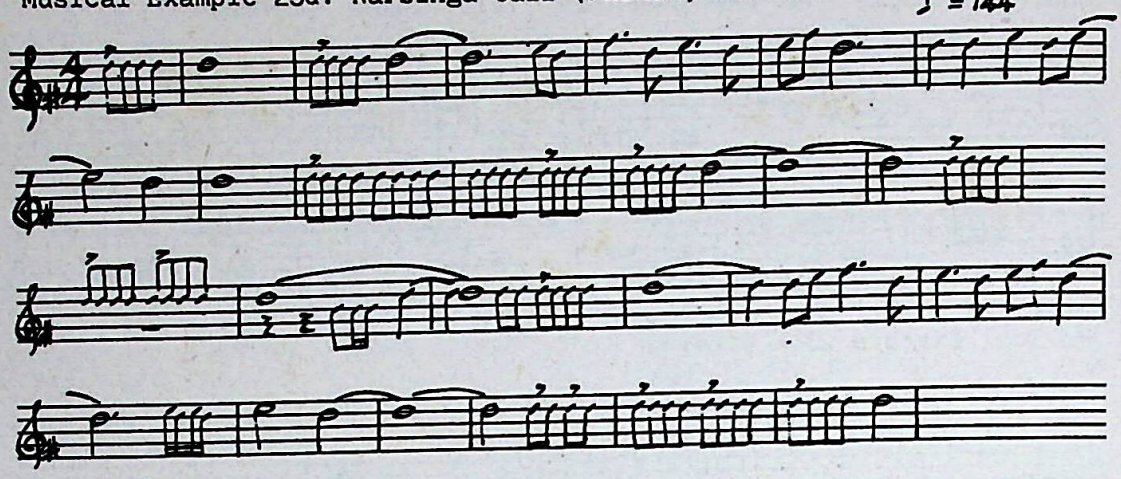
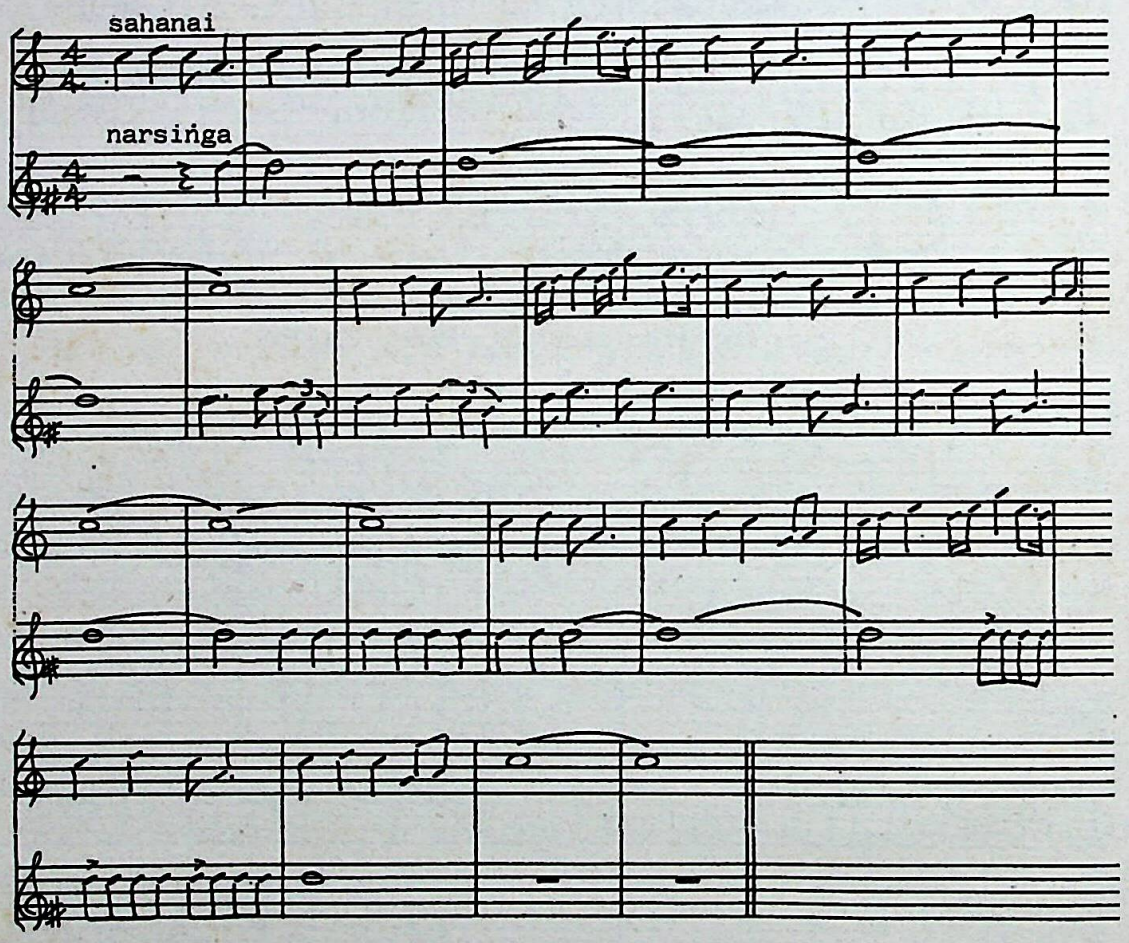
Musical Example 23d: Narsiṅga call (Phinām, Gorkha)



Musical Example 24a: Narsiṅga melody (Phinām, Gorkha)



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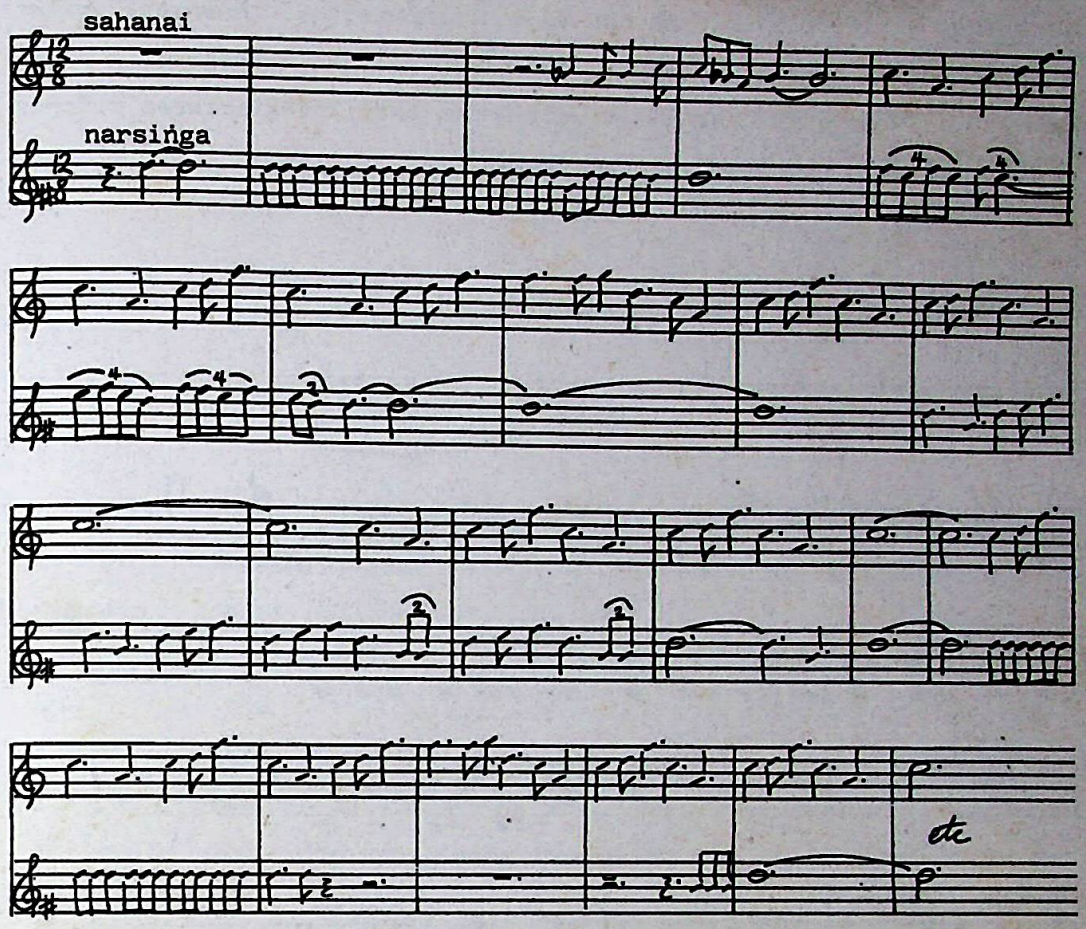
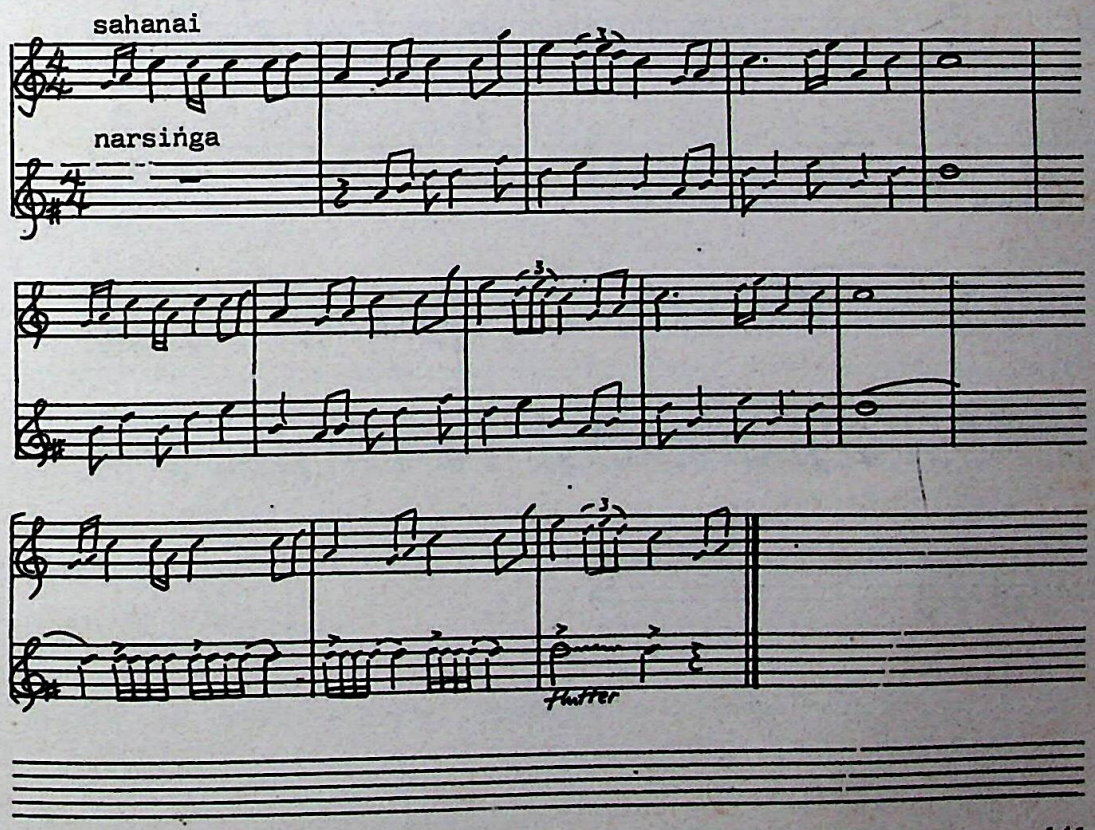
Musical Example 24b: Narsiṅga melody (Phinām, Gorkha)



Musical Example 24c: Narsiṅga melody (Phinām, Gorkha)



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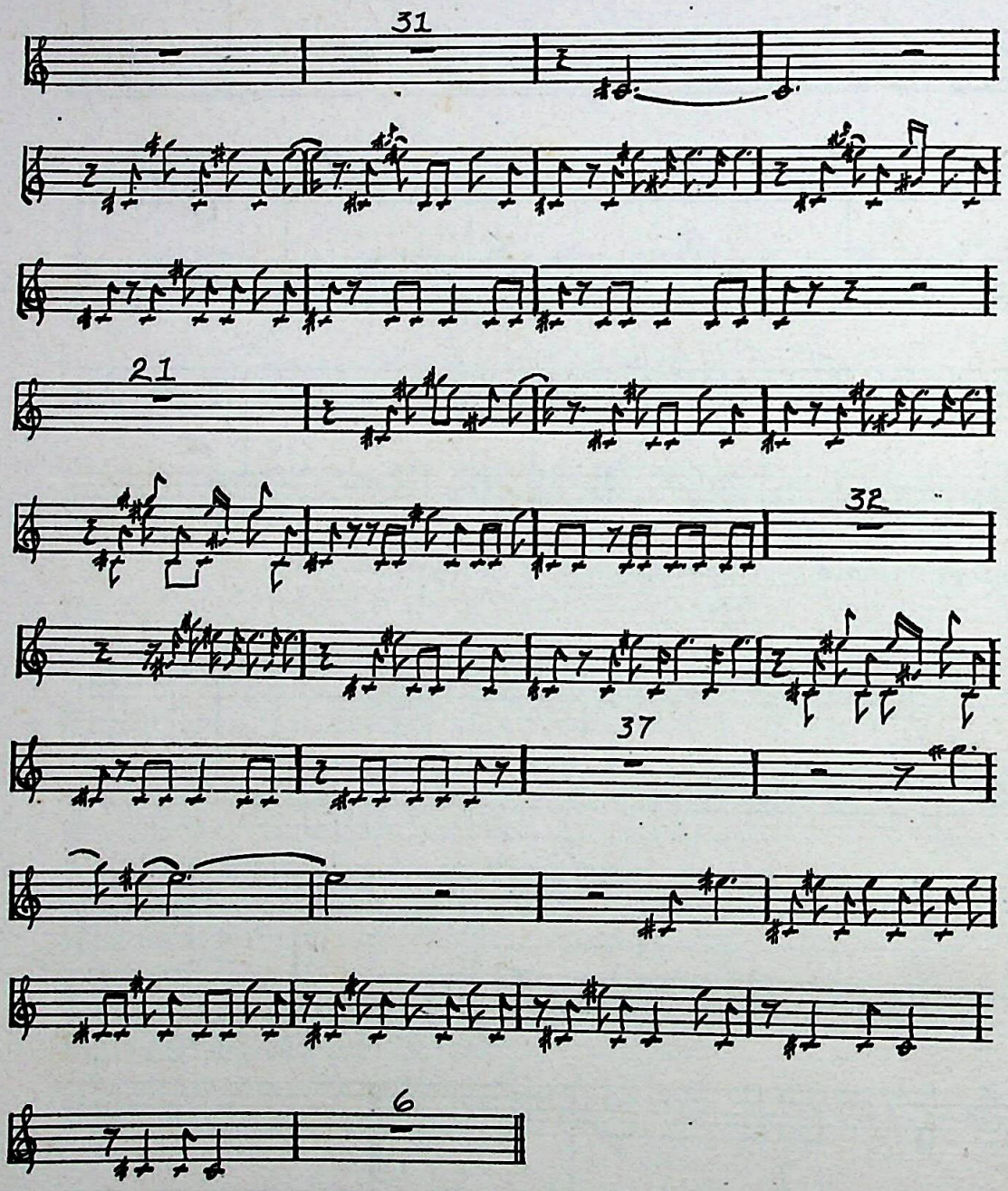
into the latter group, along with the Chinese laba and the Soviet Central Asian karnai (also played with shawms and percussion). However, whilst these instruments commonly play figures based on the interval of a sixth (Baines 1980: 79-80), the karnāl of West Nepal oscillates between pitches at an interval of a major tenth (Example 25).

Musical Example 25: Karnāl call (Lumle, Kaski)



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6

PAÑCAI BĀJĀ AND THE CALENDRICAL CYCLE

The Hindu calendar, being divided into a series of auspicious and inauspicious seasons, completely dominates Nepalese social behaviour. The auspicious seasons include the uttarāyana, or northward course of the sun, from the winter to the summer solstice (Pauś - Asār), when the length of the days and light increases. This period represents 'day' for the gods. Similarly, the light half of each lunar month, from new to full moon, the month of Baiśakh (April-May), sacred to Kṛṣṇa, and the saṃkrānti ('incoming') days, when the sun enters each new zodiacal sign, are considered to be auspicious. The rainy season is inauspicious, because during these four months, Viṣṇu is believed to be sleeping on the ocean bed, leaving the world without his protection. Consequently, weddings and sacred thread ceremonies are not performed. When Viṣṇu reawakens in Kartik (October-November), the winter season of Satya Nārāyaṇ pūjās, and the offering of flowers and five types of animal at shrines commences.

The work and some of the repertoire of the pañcai bājā are seasonal, reflecting both the devotional and the agricultural calendars. Weddings are confined to the three auspicious seasons of Baiśakh - Asār (April - July), Maṅsir (November - December), and Māgh - Phālgun (January - March). Sacred thread ceremonies (vratabandha) are restricted to a few auspicious dates during Baiśakh - Asār (April - July), and Māgh - Cait (January - April).

Unlike in Newār society, there is no calendar restriction on the use

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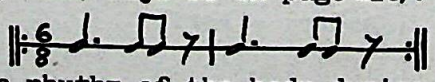
of the pañcai bājā instruments. (The Newārs do not play any drums which have an application of black tuning paste (khau) during the rice-transplanting season, see Hṛdaya 1957: 14).

The professional year of damāi musicians may be divided into three broad seasons, each with its own specific items of repertoire in addition to the general repertoire for which there is no seasonal variation. The seasons are:

1. The rice-transplanting season (Baiśakh - Śravan)
2. The post-rice-transplanting festival season (Śravan - Bhadra)
3. Winter - spring devotional season (Kartik - Baiśakh)

1. The Rice-Transplanting Season

The months of Baiśakh and Jyestha (May - June), prior to the monsoon, are hot and dry. Farmers eagerly await the start of the rains so that rice planting may commence, and there are several rites for the encouragement of the rains which utilize the services of the pañcai bājā. The seasonal rāga asāre is played in this connection. This rāga, named after the month of Asār, is played only from Baiśakh (May) to the festival of Kṛṣṇa jātrā in Śravan (August), that is, prior to and during the rice-transplanting (ropāī) season. Two 'rain making' rites are observed in Gorkha - jaldhāra and lakhpāti - during which the priests of Gorkha Darbār propitiate Mahādev and Gaṅga on behalf of the community, assisted by the Darbār pañcai bājā (see Chapter 7). In other villages in the Gorkha area (eg. Khaireni, Amp Pipal), the village council (gāũ pañcāyat) may arrange for the celebration of jaldhāra if the rain seems late in coming. The local pañcai bājā assumes the role of scapegoat; whilst playing asāre from house to house, the villagers enjoy the privilege of throwing water over the musicians, to encourage the rain. (Plate 65)

Asāre (as played by Tin Mane (Gorkha district) pañcai bājā) is given in Example 26 overleaf. (That of Gorkha Darbār pañcai bājā is on page 215). It is characterized by the ḍholaki rhythm:  which musicians describe as suggestive of the rhythm of the body during rice transplanting - a rice shoot is taken on the upbeat and planted on

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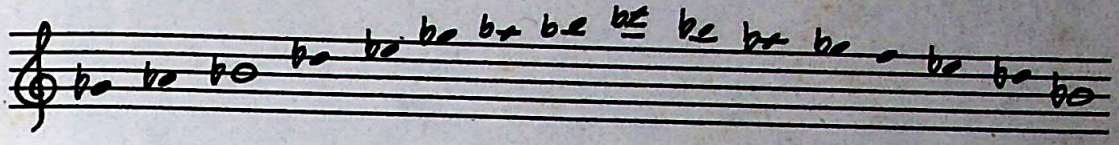
the downbeat. The rāga is pentatonic with an additional note in the descending form - the perfect fifth above the tonic - and has a range of a major thirteenth:



Musical Example 26: Asāre played by Tin Mane pañcai bājā

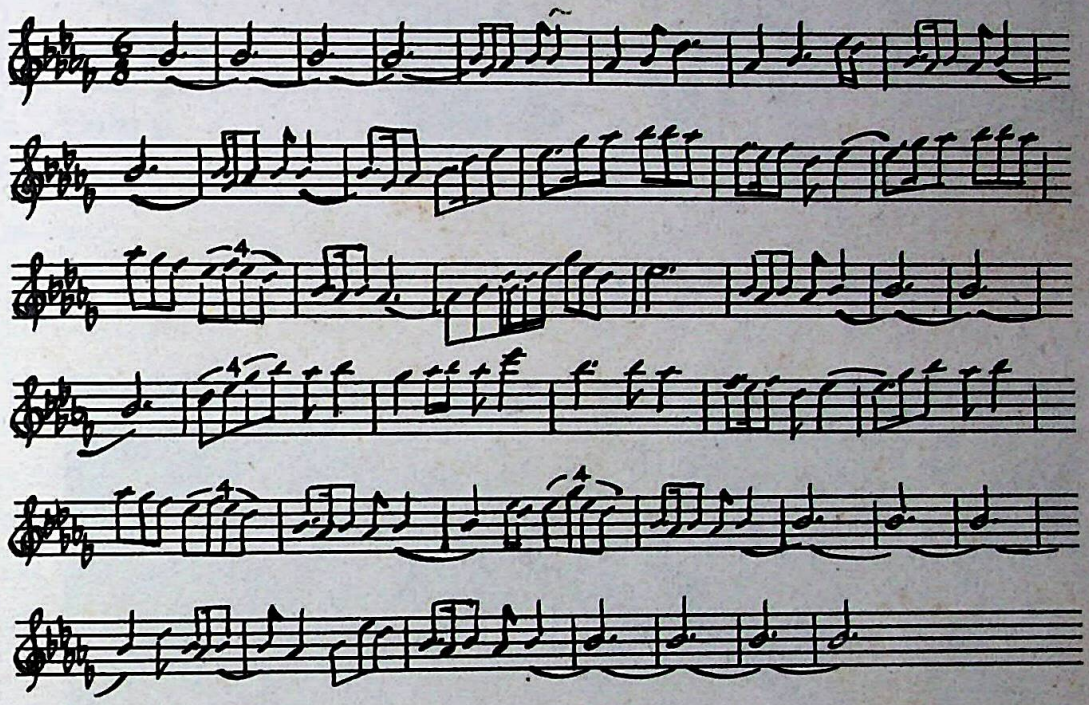


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Plate 65: Water-throwing during Jaldhāra (Gorkha)

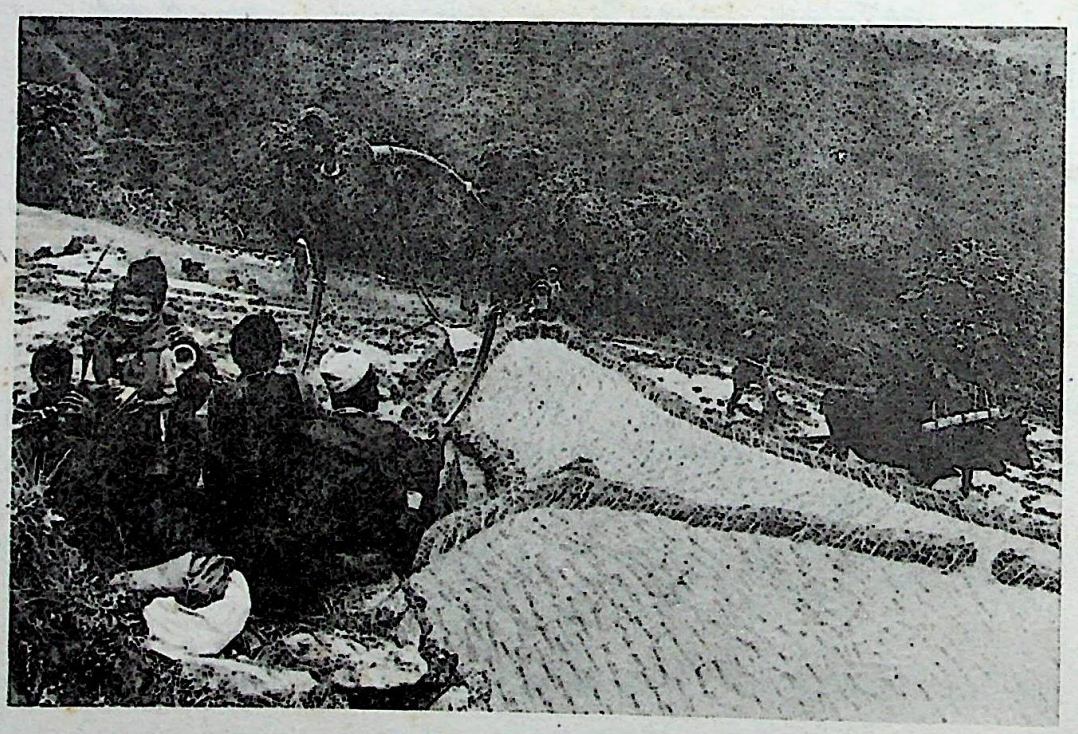

Plate 66: Bajāune ropaī (Tin Mane, Gorkha)

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The rice-transplanting season begins in Asār with the commencement of the heavy rains. Traditionally, 15 Asār - asārpandra - was a day of forced labour (beṭhi), when landowners could exact free labour from their tenants and service people. On this day, the landowner was expected to provide a pañcai bājā for the entertainment and encouragement of his workforce. Today, between Asār 15 and the end of Śrāvaṇ, a few wealthier landlords uphold this bajāune ropāī (musical rice-transplanting) tradition for a day, although most farmers have dispensed with it as an unnecessary extravagance. Although a bajāune ropāī may take place on any day during these six weeks, the beginning and end of the season are the most popular. The transplanting relies on the weather - it can only be effected if there is sufficient rainfall to flood the terraces. Often, at the beginning of the transplanting work the landowner will engage a brāhmin priest to perform a nāga pūjā in his fields, to propitiate the serpent gods who dwell there and control the water supply. For this occasion, the auspicious service of the pañcai bājā often is required (Plate 66).

Alternatively, landowners sometimes hire pañcai bājā for the last day of their rice-transplanting, when traditionally, the workers indulge in mud fights (hile khel), and singing and dancing. Caplan notes a similar tradition amongst the Limbu of East Nepal. There, the pañcai bājā plays in the paddy fields to accompany the Limbu rice dance (dhān nāc), which 'involves a line of men and women hand to hand in a series of musical challenges and rebuttals' (Caplan 1970:68).

The pañcai bājā usually goes to the fields in the early afternoon, and may play as they follow the ploughs (as on the wider terraces of the flat land by the Darauṇḍi River), or as they sit near the transplanters (as at Tin Mane, where the terracing is steep and shallow). The narsiṅgas announce the arrival of the band, and once the initiating rāg, sojho has been played, asāre is played. The pañcai bājā serenades the workers with the popular repertoire, interspersed with refrains of asāre, and at sunset, accompanies the workforce on their journey home. They usually stop at a resting place (cautāra) en route, and entertain themselves with singing and dancing well into the night.

Asāre is played in connection with the celebration of Caṇḍī purṇimā - the full moon day of Baiśakh which is sacred to the goddess Caṇḍī, a

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fierce manifestation of Durgā. This goddess is especially revered by Magars, and in some Magar settlements in the Gorkha area (eg. Matlo Kokhe, north or Gorkha Bajār, and Birinchok, to the south), the celebrations last for two days. On the purṇimā, families make their offerings at Caṇḍī shrines, and the following day, gather to sing, dance and enjoy themselves. A particular type of trance dance - ghanto nāc - is performed on this afternoon. This is a female dance tradition, the dance being taught to young girls by old adepts, who accompany the dancers by intoning mystical formulae, and giving directions. In Matlo Kokhe, there is an independent male dance bhāle ghanto (cock dance), the mood of which is totally different from that of the women's dance. The men, well-oiled, dress as 'jogis'[1], either in ragged clothing with baskets on their heads, or with masks, or in women's clothes, carrying 'babies', and menace and entertain the crowd of onlookers with dancing and mimicry involving much sexual innuendo. A pañcai bājā leads the dancers in procession to the village; playing standard processional music (jhyāure, khyāli, etc.), and on arrival in the village square, the male and female dancers combine to make a begging round from house to house, accompanied by pañcai bājā. Entertainment is provided for each householder in return for spirit or money (there is no additional payment for the band), and the fun usually lasts all night.

1. Jogi is a general term for ascetic, and more specifically, for the Kānphaṭa or followers of Gorakhnāth. However, their name has accrued a wide range of meanings, from 'saint' to 'villain'. Writing of the Pañjab, Rose comments:

> Every rascally beggar who pretends to be able to tell fortunes, or to practice astrological and necromantic arts, in however small a degree, buys himself a drum and calls himself, and is called by others, a Jogi... They are a thoroughly vagabond set, and wander about the country beating a drum and begging... The Jogi is so impure that he will eat the offerings made at any shrine.
>
> (Rose 1914:II/389)

In Nepal, the jogi also features in the female rateuli tradition - the entertainment enjoyed by the female members of a bridegroom's household once the (male) wedding procession has departed for the bride's. During rateuli, women dress as jogis, with baskets or cloths on their heads and enormous phalluses tied at their loins. As they dance, they try to capture other women, delighting and menacing them with quite explicit sexual enactments. Here again, the jogi is represented as a comic and sexually rampant figure.

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The male part of the ghanto tradition has affinities with some of the elements of hile jātrā, celebrated in Śrāvaṇ (see below) - i.e. the jogi costuming, sexual jesting and begging from door to door.

2. The Post-Rice-transplanting Festival Season

The major season of (principally Newāri) festivals begins at the end of the rice-transplanting season, in Śrāvaṇ, when people can afford the time to 'let off steam' and relax a little after the strenuous months of work in the paddy fields. The damāi play a major part in both Nepali and Newāri festivals, but for the latter, do not usually play pañcai bājā. Rather, they assume the role that would be taken by the Newāri kusle if they numbered amongst the Gorkha population, acting as shawm players for Newāri music groups, comprised large and small lalākhīṃ and bhusiāḥ (known locally as mṛdaṅga and jhyāli), or accompany a deity's chariot procession (rath jātrā) with nagārā and sahanai. Within a space of two weeks, the damāi participate in the festivals of gāī-jātrā, hile-jātrā, Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī, Kṛṣṇa jātrā and Bhimsen jātrā.

The festivals commence on the full moon day of the light half of Śrāvaṇ (August), with janai purṇimā, the day on which brāhmins and chetris renew their sacred threads. Also, from this full moon, for nine days, until the morning following Kṛṣṇa's birthday (Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī), the terrible demoness, Lākhe, is rampant in Gorkha and the surrounding villages.[1] Lākhe represents one of the evil forces sent to kill the baby Kṛṣṇa by his wicked uncle Kaṃsa, because the latter was destined to be overthrown by the child god. A costumed damāi dancer, complete with grotesque Lākhe mask and accompanied by a second dancer acting the part of a joker, dances through the town to the music of an ensemble of two bamboo notch flutes (muralli), tenor frame drum, side drum and jhyāli, played by damāi.

Lākhe's movements match the distinctive rhythm of the Lākhe nāc music, with its three stressed beats (Musical example 27). On each of the first two beats, she makes a skip, causing her ankle bells to jingle, and on the third beat, she springs and freezes, twitching the small

1. In the Kathmandu Valley, Lākhe also appears during the festival of Indra jātrā (September), which is not observed in Gorkha.

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pieces of cloth that she holds in each hand menacingly. The Lākhe nāc melody is the Newāri rāg sinajya, which corresponds with the Nepali rāg asāre, as the seasonal rāg of the transplanting period. The rāg accords with the Western major scale, and the melody is characterized by its overall descent through an octave over 32 beats, the second half of which is repeated. The timbre of the muralli is very similar to that of the Newāri peasant (jyapu) transverse flute - bamsurī - groups of which can be heard playing sinajya in the Kathmandu Valley throughout this season. The tenor frame drum and side drum are typical components of kusle wedding bands.

This is one example of how the damāi have responded to the needs of the individual ethnic groups of Nepal (another being the Magar ghanto nāc). Here, they are fulfilling the function of a Newāri music group, and are playing authentic Newāri music.

For the first three days of her nightly preambles (ie. on janai purṇimā, gāī-jātrā and hile-jātrā), Lākhe refrains from begging, but from the fourth day, the group proceeds from house to house, with a different circuit each night, and the demoness dances before each house until remuneration is forthcoming. On the morning following Kṛṣṇa's birthday, Lākhe is ritually killed by Kṛṣṇa at about five o'clock in the morning, in Ṭhūlo Āgan, and does not reappear until the following year's janai purṇimā. However, last year (1987), to the consternation of the Newār community, the damāi resurrected Lākhe during the Tīj festival, which fell ten days after her 'demise', in order to supplement their income. The Newārs thought this both irregular and inauspicious, and angrily refused to give any money.

The celebrations of the festival of gāī-jātrā ('cow procession') fuse a number of diverse elements:

a) The remembrance of the dead, with the performance of rites on behalf of deceased family members.

b) Social criticism and political satirization.

c) Themes associated with rice-transplanting and fertility.

In Kathmandu, the separate strands are divided between morning and afternoon, the cow processions taking place in the morning and the political lampooning later on, but in other villages of the Valley, the elements are combined into a single celebration (Anderson 1977:101-3).

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In Gorkha, the remembrance of the dead is confined to the day of gāī-jātrā, and the second and third elements belong to the hile (mud), or ropāī (rice-transplanting) jātrā of the following day.

Gāī-jātrā is observed by all bereaved Newāri families in honour of the souls of relations who died during the year. Newārs believe that Yama Rāj, the God of Death, opens the gates of the Underworld on one day of the year only. The journey to his kingdom is an arduous one, during which rivers of fire may have to be traversed. The journey is easier if the spirit of the deceased is guided by a sacred cow. At gāī-jātrā, bereaved families provide a 'cow' for their deceased, which is taken in procession through the town, and others can earn religious merit by making offerings to those in the procession.

The Gorkha gāī-jātrā amalgamates elements of the highly individual gāī-jātrā traditions of the three Kathmandu Valley towns, reflecting the mixed origins of the Gorkha Newār community. Thus, the 'cows' take a variety of forms:

a) Small boys may be costumed elaborately to represent sacred cows, accompanied by partners dressed as ascetics (jogi), following the Kathmandu tradition.

b) This 'cow' and jogi may be incorporated into a Rāmāyaṇ procession, in which Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmān and Hanumān accompany a portable shrine (rath) containing a photograph of the deceased, with five or six pre-pubescent girls (kanyā keṭī) in attendance, and a crowd of identically dressed relatives and friends singing rāmāyaṇ - the life-history of the deceased, following a Patan tradition.

c) In accordance with the Bhaktapur tradition, cows are constructed from baskets with poles protuding from them, which are dressed up and danced above the head. These ḍokoko gāī (basket cows) are carried in procession with groups of boys dancing tak-tuke - a stick dance performed in two lines - and Newāri music groups comprised large and small lalakhiṁ and bhusiāḥ, with one or two damāi taking the role of kusle, and playing the gāī-jātrā bākya (cow procession tune) on sahanai (Musical example 28). There are five separate processions of basket cows, each originating from one of the five Newār settlement areas of Gorakhkāli pañcāyat - Gorkha Bajār, Maidan, Chipiṭol, Pāṭicaur and Barāha (see Map 5).

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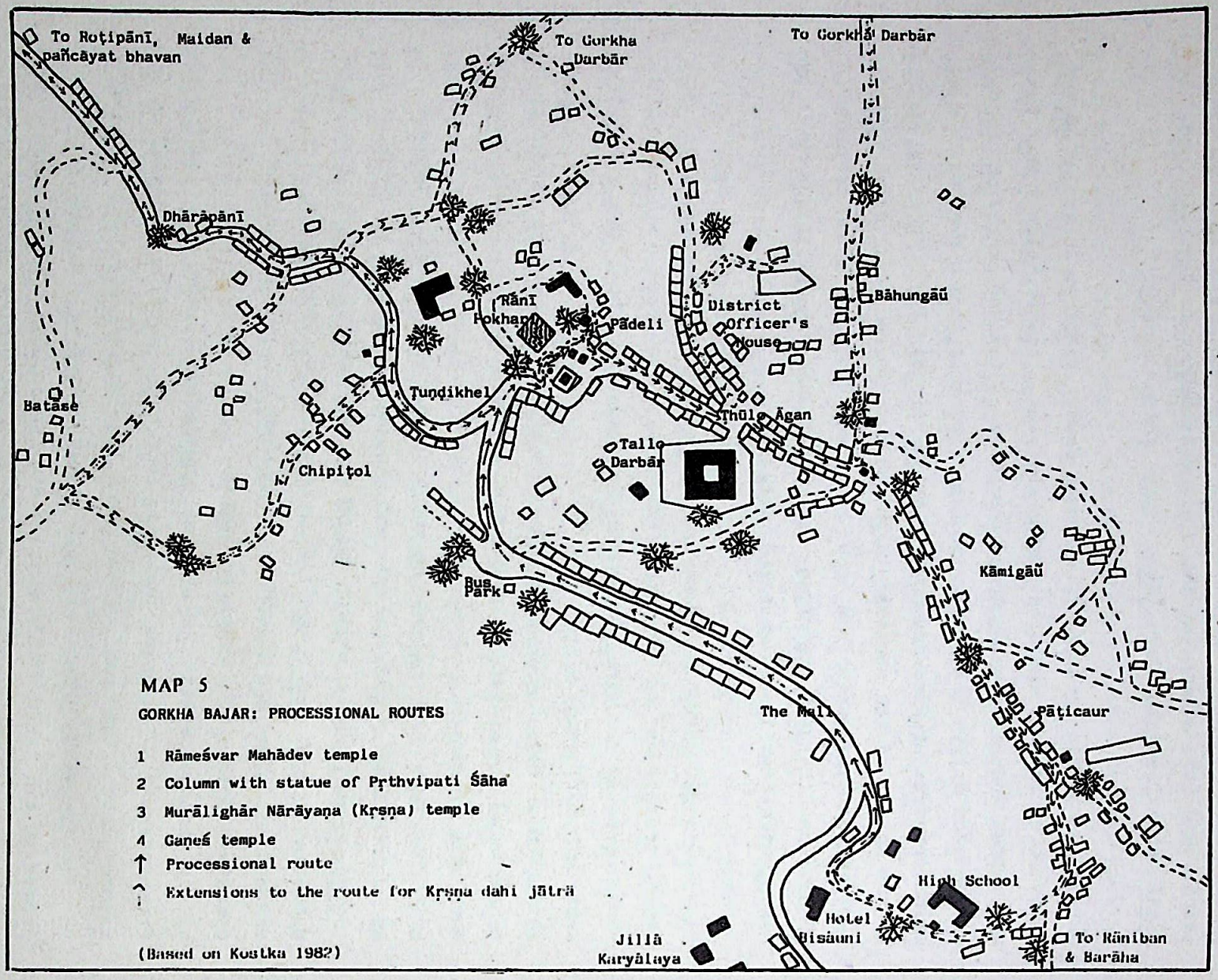

MAP 5

GORKHA BAJAR: PROCESSIONAL ROUTES

1 Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple
2 Column with statue of Pṛthvipati Śāha
3 Murālighār Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa) temple
4 Gaṇeś temple
↑ Processional route
↑ Extensions to the route for Kṛṣṇa dahi jātrā

(Based on Kostka 1982)

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d) A banner (nisān) may substitute for a dokoko gāī, and is carried around in procession with the same type of music group, but without the stick dancers.

Hile, or ropāĩ jātrā, which falls on the day after gāī-jātrā, has the atmosphere of a carnival. The gāī-jātrā season is the one occasion of the year on which there is freedom of speech, a tradition said to date from the time of Pratāp Malla (AD.1641-1674) (Anderson 1977:103-4). Satirical sketches are acted out in Ṭhūlo Āgan, ministers and public figures are lampooned and the prevailing social conditions are criticized. People dress in ludicrous costumes, paint their faces or wear grotesque masks, and generally enjoy themselves. Throughout the afternoon and evening, there is an endless procession around the town (see Map 5), the hile-jātrā, which well-and-truly celebrates the end of the rice-transplanting season. Some men are yoked to 'ploughs' and others dress as female rice planters, clutching bundles of paddy shoots which they 'plant' all over the town as they perform a rice-transplanting dance (ropāĩ nāc). The overall theme is that of fertility, some of the female impersonators nursing 'babies', and others demonstrating where they come from!

Once again, music is provided by the damāi - either playing pañcai bājā, or in combination with Newāri music groups. The pañcai bājā play asāre and popular repertoire, and the Newāri groups with sahanai play asāre and the gāī-jātrā bākya, each of which may be played in fast and slow tempi. A slow gāī-jātrā bākya in compound time provides the processional music, and on arrival at each house, a slow-tempo asāre is played, to which the ropāĩ nāc is danced, either in sets, or in a circle, with a characteristic planting motion on each downbeat. As the dance progresses the tempo increases. Asāre may be superceded by the gāī-jātrā bākya in a fast four time, to which the dancers flick small pieces of cloth held in their hands as they circle round frantically. Sometimes the frenzied dance ends with a fast khyāli before a change of gear to the slow gāī-jātrā bākya for moving on.

Five days later, the procession is repeated throughout the night of Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī, beginning at the Murālighār Nārāyaṇ (Kṛṣṇa) temple at Rāni Pokhari. Remuneration is begged from each household in front of which

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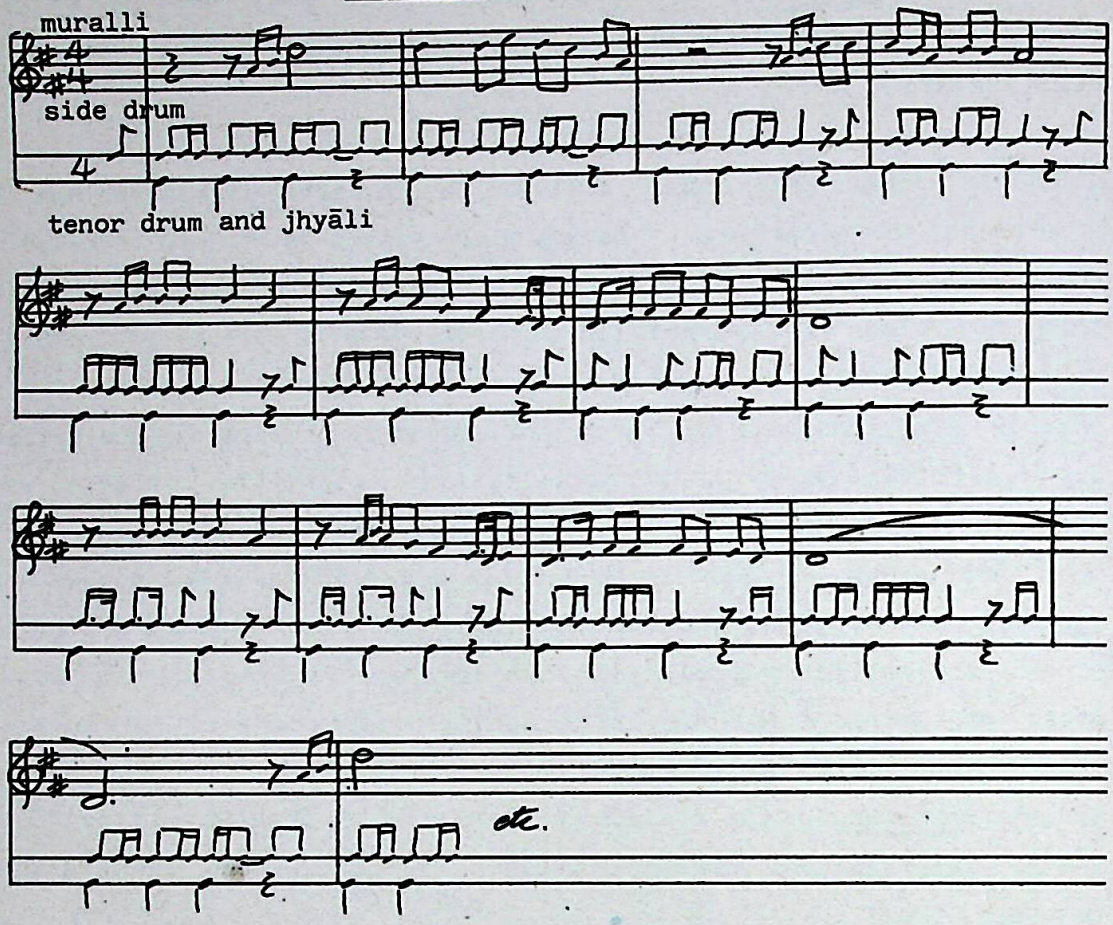
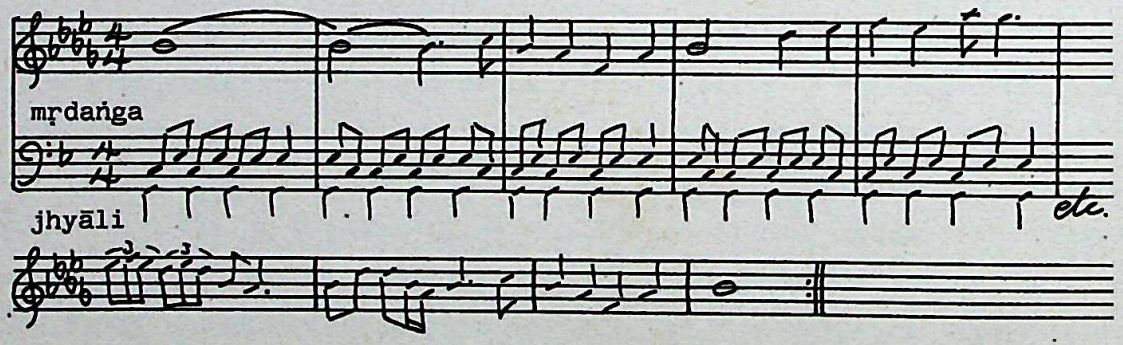
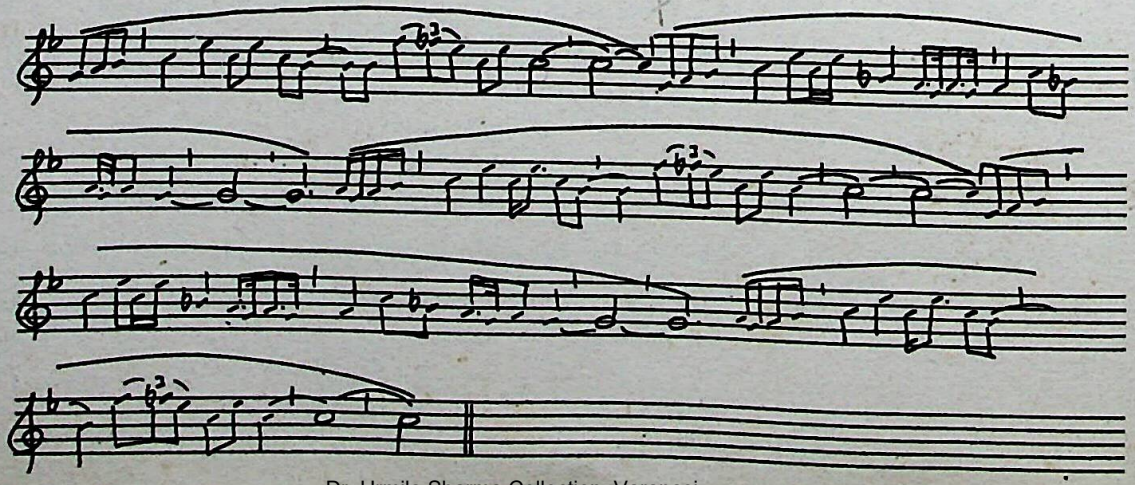
Musical Example 27: Lākhe nāc



Musical Example 28: Gaī-jātrā bākyā



Musical Example 29: Rāsa played during Kṛṣṇa dahi jātrā



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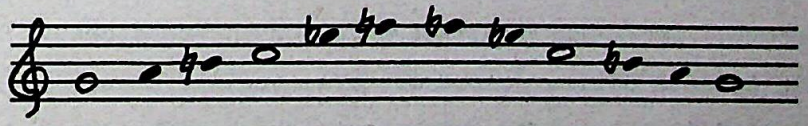
the dancers perform. Food, drink or money may be provided.

The damāi participate in another of the many celebrations surrounding Kṛṣṇa's birthday - the dahi jātrā (curd procession). After sunset on Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī, a small chariot is taken ceremonially from a particular Newār house in Ṭhūlo Āgan to the Murālighār Nārāyaṇa temple. Here, an image of Lord Kṛṣṇa is placed inside, and it is carried back to the Joshi's house in Ṭhūlo Āgan, from where this image is believed to have originated. Here, it remains in a consecrated room (deutā koṭhā) overnight and throughout the following day. The procession is led by damāi playing sahanai and damāhā (played as nagārā), and a banner (nisān). This tradition is said to have been inaugurated by Rām Śāha who invested the Joshi family with the honoured task of transporting the Kṛṣṇa chariot, in return for which they have the honourific title of Kṛṣṇa caudhari, and receive a buffalo from the Darbār at dasaī. The carrying of the banner is the hereditary task of a Khas family, and originally, the musicians' appointments were hereditary. However, today, any Darbār musician is eligible for this work, as the originally appointed family died out.

On the afternoon of Kṛṣṇa jātrā, Lord Kṛṣṇa is carried in the chariot in procession with sahanai playing rāsa (Musical example 29) and damāhā (as nagārā), and the banner, all around the town, and up to the Darbār and back, receiving offerings of curd, sweetmeats and fruit from every household. The chariot is returned to the Joshi house, where it remains for another night, returning to the Kṛṣṇa temple the following day.

The rāg rāsa, played in this connection, is hexatonic, but with two pitches flattened in descent:



It has a secondary tonic a perfect fourth below the primary tonic, and of its five phrases, the first, third and fifth cadence on the primary tonic (C), and the second and fourth on the secondary tonic (G). The overall structure of the musical material played at each stop during the procession is A-B-A-B-A.

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The damāi are required for another Newāri rath jātrā - this time in honour of Bhimsen. During the morning, the Newāri community offer a buffalo and a goat to Bhimsen, the propitiation and sacrifice of which are accompanied by sahanai playing rāsa, and damāhā played as nagārā. The sacrificial animals provide the basis of a huge Newāri feast in the evening, after which the image of Bhimsen is taken from the temple and carried by chariot around the town to receive the offerings of devotees. Again, procession is accompanied by sahanai playing rāsa, and damāhā played as nagārā.

Thus, during the major Newāri festival season, the damāi function in a variety of capacities - as ritual nagarci for the rath jātrās of Kṛṣṇa and Bhimsen, playing sacred music; as Kusle, in combination with Newāri music groups during gāī-jātrā, hile-jātrā and Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī; as a Newāri band, playing unequivocally Newāri music for Lākhe, and as themselves, playing pañcai bājā (during hile-jātrā).

3. The Winter-Spring Devotional Season

The eleventh day of each lunar cycle (ekādaśī) is sacred to Viṣṇu, and of these, the ekādaśī that falls in the light half of Kartik (Oct-Nov) - the Ṭhūlo or Haribodhinī ekādaśī - is the most important. This marks the end of Viṣṇu's four month sleep on his bed of snakes at the bottom of the sea, and on this day, he returns to the world to offer protection from misfortune, disease and evil spirits. In Nepal, Viṣṇu is worshipped as Nārāyaṇ, and from Haribodhinī ekādaśī throughout the months of Kartik Mansir and Paus families may perform a Satya Nārāyaṇ pūjā in his honour. This is one of the most expensive and elaborate pūjās that a family can have performed, wealthier families engaging the services of as many as five brāhmin priests over a period of three or five days. At the end of the Nārāyaṇ pūjā, the flower temple to which offerings are made must be ritually disposed of, usually by submersion in a river or sacred pond or may be taken with flower offerings (phūlko ḍoli) to a shrine. A pañcai bājā may be engaged to lead the procession. The damāi often have a pañcai bājā to play throughout their Satya Nārāyaṇ pūjā, but this tends to be condensed into a 24-hour ritual, with a senior, literate

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member of the damāi community taking the role of priest.

From ṭhūlo ekādaśī throughout the cold months, until Baiśakh, phūlko ḍolis - litters carrying flower offerings - and pañca bali ('five offerings' - buffalo, sheep, goat, chicken and duck, or substitutes, such as eggs), are taken in procession with pañcai bājā to the shrines of a variety of deities, including Manakāmanā, Annapurna, Śiva, Himālaya and Bhagawatī, a form of adoration which is practised by many of the Hindu castes. Some shrines celebrate with a big all-night gathering on particularly auspicious occasions, for example, on the eve of Kartik purṇimā at Manakāmanā, on thulo ekādaśī at the Ultetar Śivalaya temple, and at Śrī Pañcamī - the fifth day of the waxing moon in the month of Māgh (late-January) - at the Namjung Bhagawatī temple. For this type of event, processions of devotees with pañcai bājā arrive at the shrine throughout the afternoon and night from surrounding villages. The locations of some of these shrines, deep in the jungle, makes these occasions particularly atmospheric, with the torch-lit processions approaching from all directions and the sound of the many pañcai bājās echoing through the night.

The litter, made from a pole supporting a red cloth, contains a long streamer of flowers, pipal and mango leaves threaded onto a string - the toran - and is accompanied by bearers carrying bamboo shoots decorated with red and white strips of cotton cloth and women carrying baskets containing garlands of flowers and the pūjā requirements.

Households undertaking such a pūjā fast and take a ritual bath. The pañcai bājā arrives several hours before the departure time, and entertains the family guests with popular repertoire items. Depending on the distance from the shrine, the procession may set out at any time during the afternoon or evening, either in order to keep an all-night vigil, or to arrive at the shrine before dawn. Before leaving, the pañcai bājā is feasted, and then the house is circumambulated three times (pradakṣiṇā) by the complete entourage, the pañcai bājā either playing astūti or any popular item.[1] Throughout the journey, entertainment music is played, but on arrival at the front of the shrine, this is replaced by astūti. The procession circumambulates the temple in a clockwise direction three

1. Unless the phūlko ḍoli offering is combined with a Satya Nārāyaṇ pūjā, there is no pūjā at the home prior to departure for the shrine.

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times, led by the pañcai bāja, which may continue to play astūti, or may revert to the popular repertoire. The band remains playing at the temple door whilst the pūjā requirements and flower garlands are brought out. The garlands are presented to everyone in the procession, and are hung from ritual objects, such as the temple bells and sacred trees in the vicinity of the shrine. The pilgrims make their offerings, and the litter is carried around the shrine three times whilst the streamer of leaves and flowers is unravelled and hung from the temple struts, together with a sacred thread (rakṣā). A fire offering (ūṁ ṛṭṛi) may be combined with phūlko ḍoli or pañca bali offerings (Plates 67 and 68).

The women settle down in groups to keep all-night vigil over their oil-wick lamps lit in honour of the deity, and sing to help keep themselves awake and entertained. All night, the forest twinkles with the flames of hundreds of burning wick lamps, and resounds to the music of as many as twenty independent pañcai bājās, who entertain their patrons with the popular repertoire. As dawn breaks, the groups prepare to leave, and as they thread their way back through the jungle, the music retreats with them. For the homeward journey, a small girl is loaded into the litter, and traditionally, the pañcai bājā plays cā̃cari. These days, however, popular items tend to be played in preference to the more complex traditional rāga. Oral history relates that until recently, if two such processions met on the road, the narsiṅgas (which always lead) would confront one another, each refusing to give way to the other party which could result in stone-throwing and fighting! Having returned home, everyone, including the musicians, is feasted.

The spring months - Māgh, Phālgun and Cait (Feb-May) - provide the most auspicious season for honouring the protecting deity of the family (kul-devatā pūjā). Families celebrate this major pūjā, which involves the removal of the family deity from its shrine in the home (pūjā koṭhā) to a temporary outside shrine, every two to three years. The temporary shrines are located on consecrated ground in specific localities according to family and caste. For example, the shrine of the Aryjal brāhmins of Gorkha is located in Rāniban and there are Gorkha chetri shrines near Dhārāpānī, in Rāniban, and in the field immediately south of the bus stop.

The kul-devatā pūjā is a full-day event, for which the high castes

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Plate 67: Pañca bali - circumambulation of the shrine (Manakāmanā)

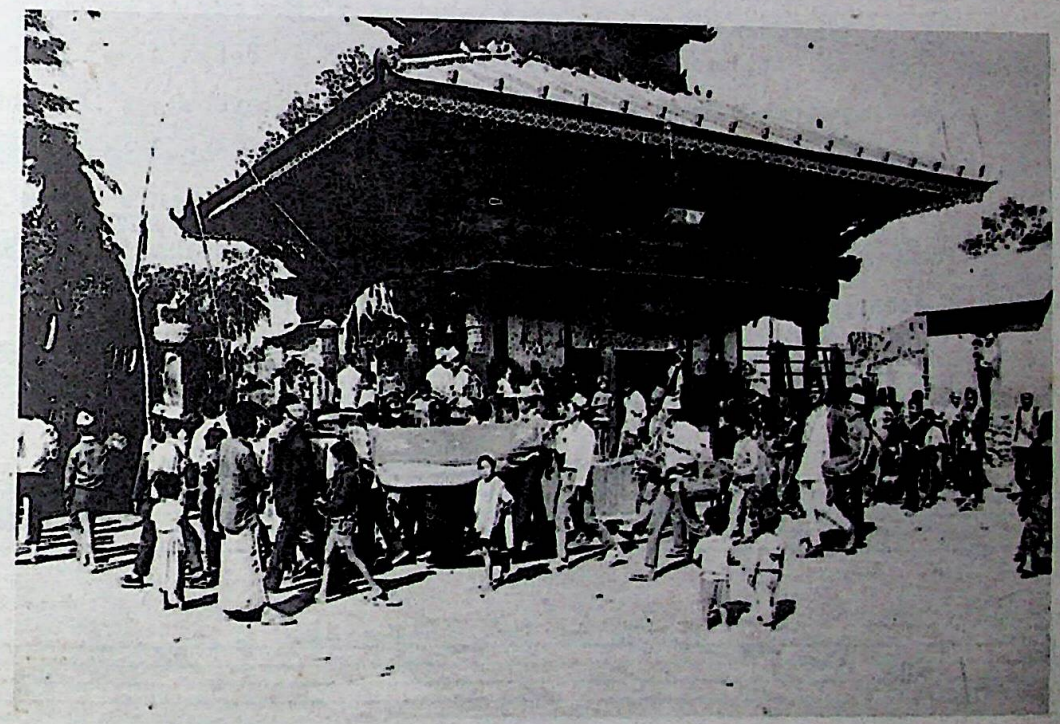

Plate 68: Phūlko ḍoli - circumambulation of the shrine (Manakāmanā)

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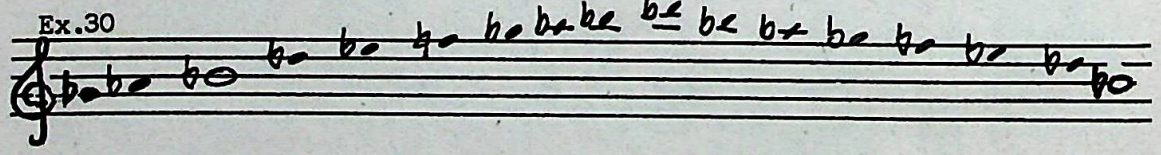
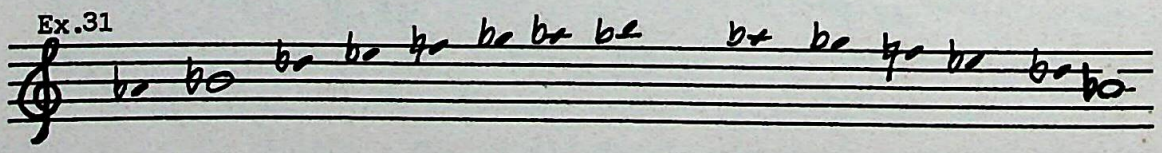
engage the services of the pañcai bājā. Initially, there is the usual form of daily worship at the family shrine, that is, the reading of sacred texts (pūjā pāṭh) followed by offerings to the deity (nitya pūjā), for both of which the pañcai bājā play astūti (Musical examples 30, 31). Following the pūjās, the pañcai bājā, playing astūti, leads the procession of priest, deity and family members(carrying the requirements for the pūjā and feast) in a ritual circuit of the house (or shrine, if it is outside the home) three times, and then to the shrine. For the first part of the journey, whilst in the vicinity of the house and those of the community, astūti is played, but once on the open road, jhyāure, khyāli, or the seasonal rāg, for example phāgu (Musical example 32) may be played, until the temporary shrine is approached.[1] Once again, astūti is played, and the shrine is circumambulated three times by the complete procession. In the vicinity of the shrine only astūti is played. For family deities which accept blood sacrifices, the pañcai bājā play astūti during the propitiation and sacrifice of the animals. On the completion of the ritual duties, the family and musicians are feasted, and the pañcai bājā leads the procession back to the family home.

Astūti is played in all sacred contexts (other than by ritual ensembles at temples) to accompany pūjās and during the circumambulation of, or arrival at shrines. There are as many versions of the rāg as there are musicians playing it, and it is difficult to find a definitive form. However, the versions played by two doyen sahanai players of Gorkha Darbār correspond closely (Musical Examples 30 and 31). Example 30 was recorded during a kul-devatā pūjā and Example 31 during Mahendra jayantī. Both versions use a hexatonic scale with a Bb tonic, but whilst in Eg.30 the fifth above the tonic is flattened in descent, this is not the case in Eg.31. The range of Eg.30 exceeds that of Eg.31 by a tone at the bottom and a minor third at the upper end of the scale:

Ex.30



Ex.31



1. In Far-West Nepal, location impinges far more on what may be played than in Central Nepal. For example, whilst processing in the vicinity of settlements, paiyena should be played, and on the open road, this is

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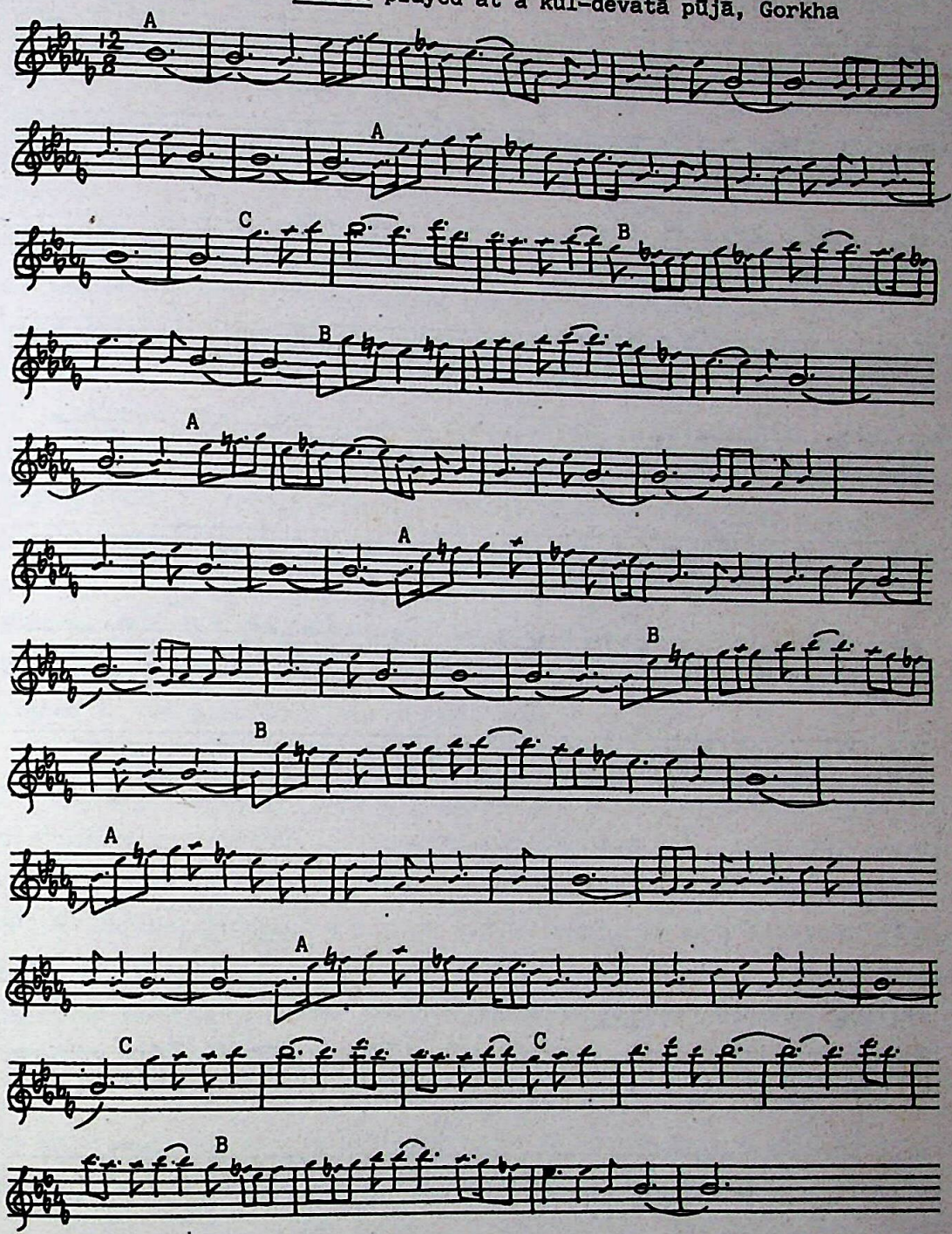
Musical Example 30: Astūti played at a kul-devatā pūjā, Gorkha



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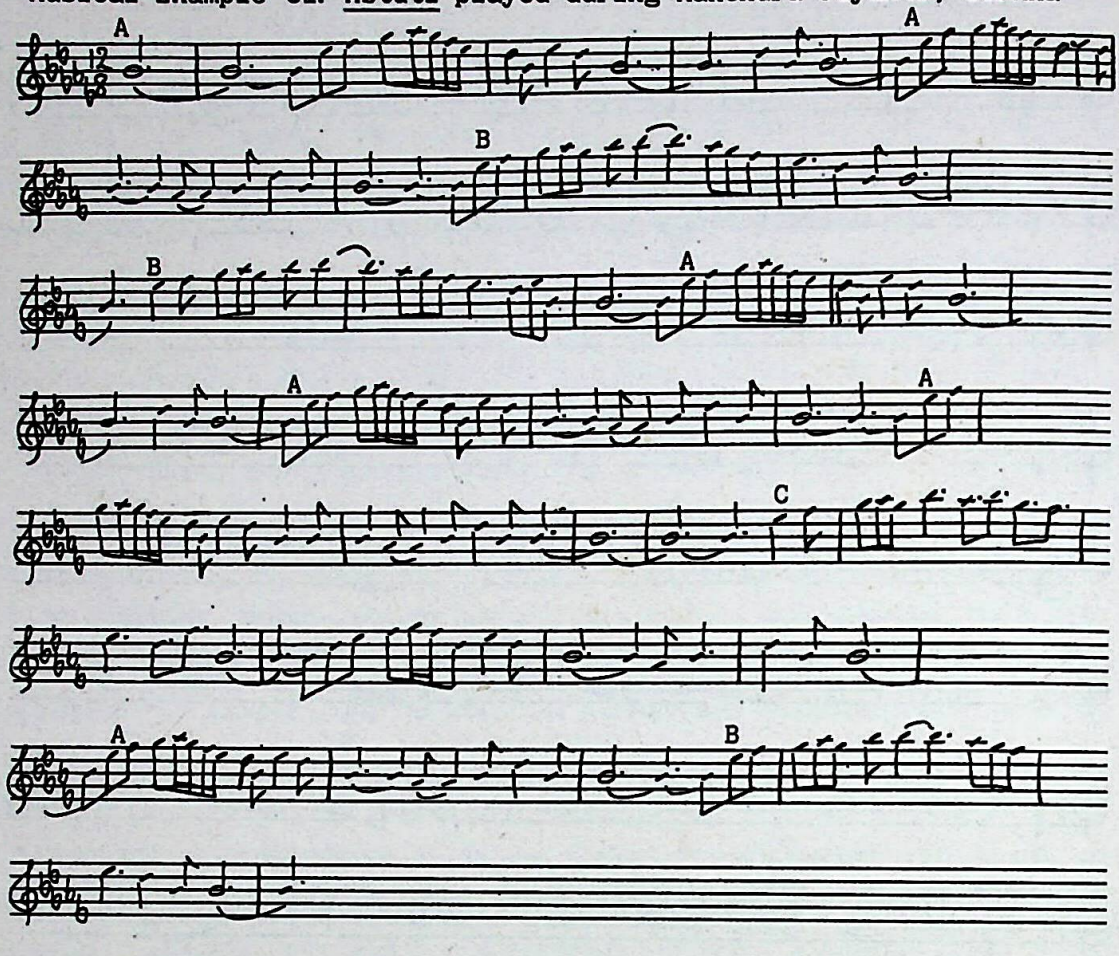
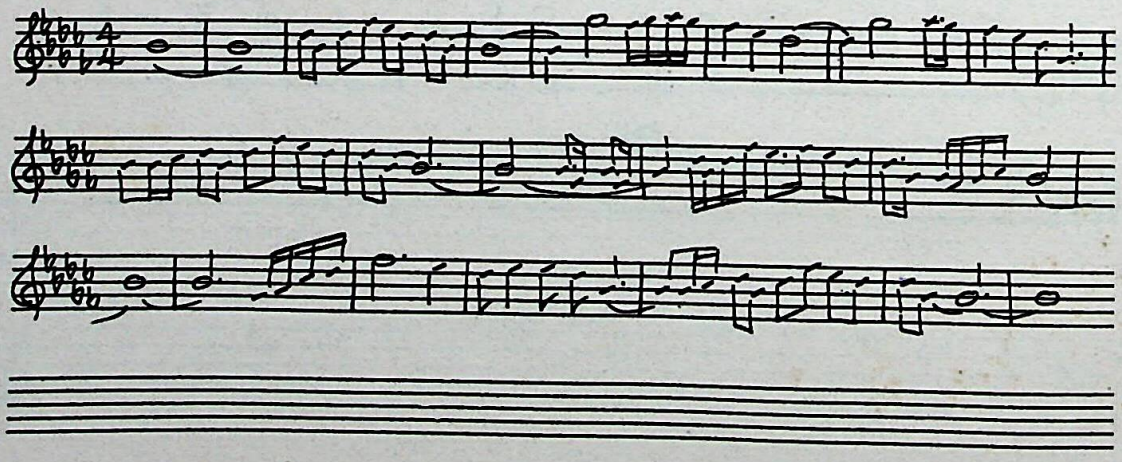
Musical Example 31: Astūti played during Mahendra Jayantī, Gorkha



Musical Example 32: Phāgu (Gorkha)



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Both examples are comprised three musical phrases (marked A, B, C in the examples), the second of which (B) approaches the upper tonic, and in Example 30, the third phrase reaches the Db a minor third above. In Example 31, this third phrase shares some of the rhythmic features of Example 30, but the melodic material represents a variant of phrase B rather than a new idea.

The name astūti is also given to the arhythmic noise which is sounded at temple doorways. When passing temples, either the whole ensemble combines in a rapid arhythmic beating of drums and clashing of cymbals, with the sahanais and narsiṅgas oscillating freely between two or more pitches, or the narsiṅgas provide a raucous blast whilst the rest of the ensemble discontinues playing for a moment. In the Bhojpur area, narsiṅgas and damāhā combine for this purpose, which is known locally as uraha. Uraha is sounded at all sacred places on the processional route, such as rivers, shrines, resting places at which sacred pipal trees offer shade, upon arrival at the bride's home, and at particularly auspicious moments during the wedding ceremony, for example, when red powder (sĩdur) is placed in the parting of the bride's hair.

In Far-West Nepal, there are several different rhythmic patterns which correspond in function with the Central Nepalese rag astuti. For example, whilst processing to and from a temple or making a ritual circumambulation of a shrine, prachau is played, but during pūjās an invocation, deutāko bājā is played. At auspicious moments during brāhmin wedding rituals, bāhun is played. In the North-West Pokhara area, the item nagārā corresponds with astūti.[2]

An eclipse of the sun is believed to be an extremely inauspicious occurrence, during which people are particularly vulnerable to attacks from all kinds of malevolent forces. Traditionally, the damāi help to ward off the threat of evil by creating an auspicious sound barrier. In

replaced by palte bājā. Whilst crossing bridges or approaching shrines, prachau is played by Jumla bands, and the deutāko bājā by Kalikoṭ bands.

2. Interestingly, in Far-West Nepal, nagārā is a drumming piece played as a royal salute (salaam), originally for Thakali rājas and later for the Śāha dynasty.

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Central Nepal, this was the production of as much noise as possible. In Central and Eastern Nepal, this tradition has faded into obscurity. In the Bhojpur area, until about twenty years ago, during an eclipse individual damai would sound the instruments at their homes and brahmins would play conch and bell. Only in Far-West Nepal is this tradition a continuing one, local repertoires including a special eclipse piece for the damahas - grahaṇ lagyo bājā.

Life-Cycle Rites

The damāi have the reputation of providing music for all the significant landmarks in the Hindu life-cycle, 'from womb to tomb'. In fact, today, this is only true of the musicians of Far-West Nepal, whose duties include playing braha bājā for the birth of a son, and for a baby's first rice-feeding ceremony (bhāt khuwāi or pāsna), and playing ulto bājā for funeral processions, in addition to playing for weddings and for sacred thread investiture (vratabandha) ceremonies.

In Central Nepal, only the latter two events demand the services of a pañcai bājā, although occasionally, the family tailor may play astūti on the muralli (notch flute) when blessing the new clothes that he has sewn for a baby about to receive its first rice. This pūjā follows the same pattern as the clothes offering pūjā (lūga chekne pūjā) for bride and groom before their marriage, when the family tailor, having sewn the wedding garments, makes a ritual presentation of them to the wife of his patron, together with a gift of a pillow in the case of the groom and a draw-string purse or blouse in the case of the bride. At the home of the patron, the clothes and gifts, along with the pūjā requirements which are provided by the patron, are placed on a winnowing tray, and have a pūjā performed on their behalf by the damāi, who plays the rāg astūti on either sahanai, or more commonly, on muralli to conclude the ritual.

Musicians are also required during the celebration of vratabandha for brahmins and chetris, or chewar, the tonsure ceremony for non-cord-wearing castes, which mark the progression of a boy from childhood to adolescence. Vratabandha (or upanayana) is one of the most important

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Hindu sacraments for high-caste boys, symbolizing their (second) birth into their caste, when they don the sacred thread for the first time, and are permitted to enjoy the privileges of their caste. As part of the ritual, the young boy has to pay obeisance to his protecting deity at his/her shrine. The journey symbolizes the boy's journey to Varanasi or another centre of spiritual learning for religious education, and his return. The boy must be escorted by his maternal uncle, who must carry him back home, and offer him food on the return journey. The procession is led by pancai bājā, or by a single damāi playing one of the pañcai bājā instruments.

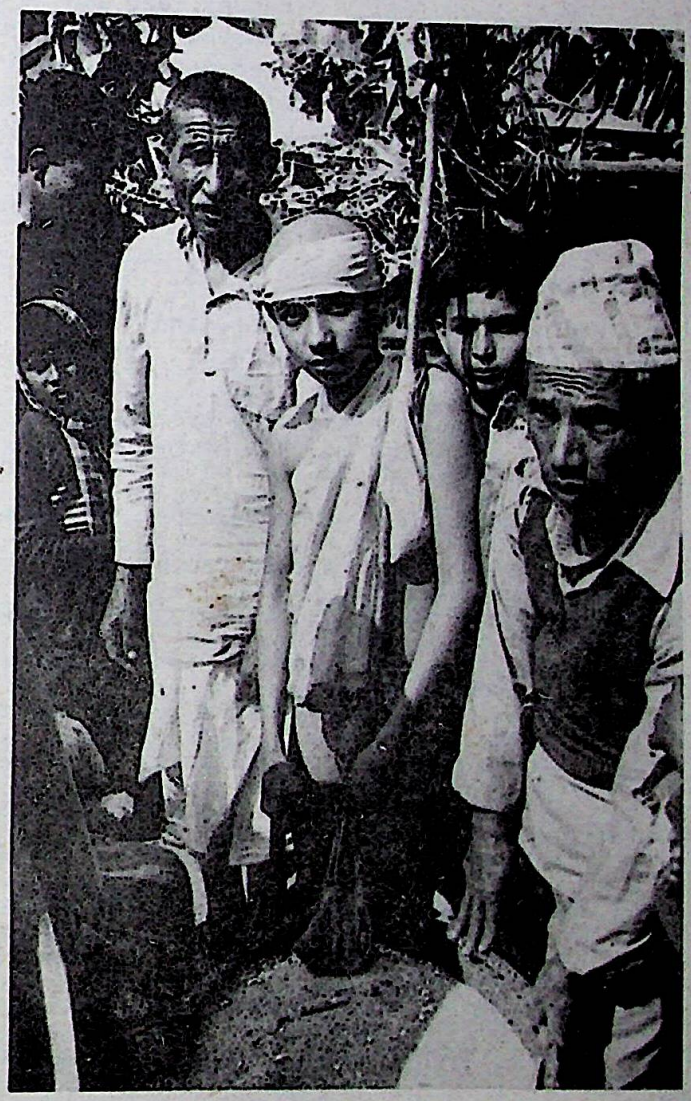

Plate 69: A young brāhmin's vratabandha (Gorkha)

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Marriage

However, the biggest single source of musical employment for the damāi is that of playing for weddings. In Hindu life marriage is the biggest and most expensive social and religious event. The celebration of a wedding is socially significant for a host of reasons, beyond the most immediate one of the linking together of two families. It is the occasion par excellence when a family may exhibit its wealth, the scale of a wedding acting as a public barometer of economic standing in the community. Dumont's observations regarding marriage in India are equally true for Nepal:

> It is the most prestigious family ceremony, and at the various social levels constitutes the main occasion on which the greatest number of members of the caste and other persons gather together. It is also the most expensive, and the marriage of a daughter in particular, is known to be the main cause of debt among Indian peasants, so imperative are the dictates of prestige, even for the poor.
>
> (Dumont 1980:109-110)

The quality of the wedding clothes and gifts, the number of guests in the wedding party, the type of wedding feast, and the size of the pañcai bājā all carry prestige value. Today, it is more prestigious to have Western band instruments leading the wedding procession, rather than the pañcai bājā, and in the Kathmandu Valley, one rarely hears traditional instruments in this context. In Gorkha, trumpet, clarinet and muralli may be added to pañcai bājā, which should include as many narsiṅgas as possible.[1] Perhaps the ostentation surrounding the celebration of a Hindu wedding originates from the Rājput 'bride-by-capture' (rakshasa) concept (Walker 1983:II/39), when the groom's party had to appear as imposing and formidable as possible. Still today, vestiges of the idea of marriage as a form of 'conquest' remain. The groom, suitably bedecked, is carried like a prince in a palanquin, or rides on horseback, sheltered by an umbrella, and with a complete entourage of male relatives. At the vanguard is the pañcai bājā, often accompanied by shotguns, which are fired at significant points during the approach to the bride's home. After the wedding ceremony, the weeping bride is carried off as booty by the groom's party.

1. In Far-West Nepal, status is measured in terms of the number of damāhā.

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Henry noted the same ethos in the weddings of Uttar Pradesh (Henry 1973: 80-1).

Each ethnic group of Nepal has its own marriage customs, the description of which falls beyond the scope of this study, and which have been documented elsewhere (Majupuria & Majupuria 1978; Bajracaryā 1972; Jones & Jones 1976). However, an almost universal feature of Nepalese weddings is the use of the pañcai bājā. Presumably, damāi musicians would have been employed exclusively by the wealthy Rājputs with whom they fled to Nepal originally. Subsequently, the practice of having a pañcai bājā was adopted by the indigenous hill-dwellers wherever they came under the influence of the newcomers, so that today, all but the most northern, high-altitude dwellers (Sherpas and Tibetanoid peoples) to be married honourably, have a pañcai bājā as part of the entourage.[1]

Regardless of the individual variations in the marriage procedures of the different groups, the duties of the pañcai bājā are more or less standard. A wedding is celebrated over several days, but the complete pañcai bājā is usually required only for the day of the wedding ceremony and the following day. In a traditional Nepalese Hindu wedding, once all the preliminary arrangements of the alliance have been completed, and the astrologer has determined the most auspicious day for the ceremony, the groom, accompanied by a large retinue of male relatives and pañcai bājā, goes to the home of the bride to receive her in marriage. Thus, on the day of the wedding, the groom's band assembles at his home and plays to entertain the guests as they arrive. The musicians and guests receive refreshment before they set off in procession for the home of the bride. The entourage is led by the narsiṅgas (and shotguns if these are included and the rest of the pañcai bājā, followed by the groom (in a palanquin or on horseback, and sheltered by an umbrella) with his male relatives bearing gifts for the bride, bringing up the rear (Plate 70). Depending on the distance between the two homes, the procession sets off at some time during the afternoon, to arrive at the bride's house at dusk. Often, the arriving party is met at the edge of the village by the bride's party of male relatives and pañcai bājā, and escorted to her home.

1. Gossips sometimes observe that a certain woman was "married without pañcai bājā", insinuating that she is unlawfully living with a man (a "love marriage").

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Plate 70: Groom's wedding procession (Gorkha)

Plate 71: Chetri wedding ceremony (Bhojpur)

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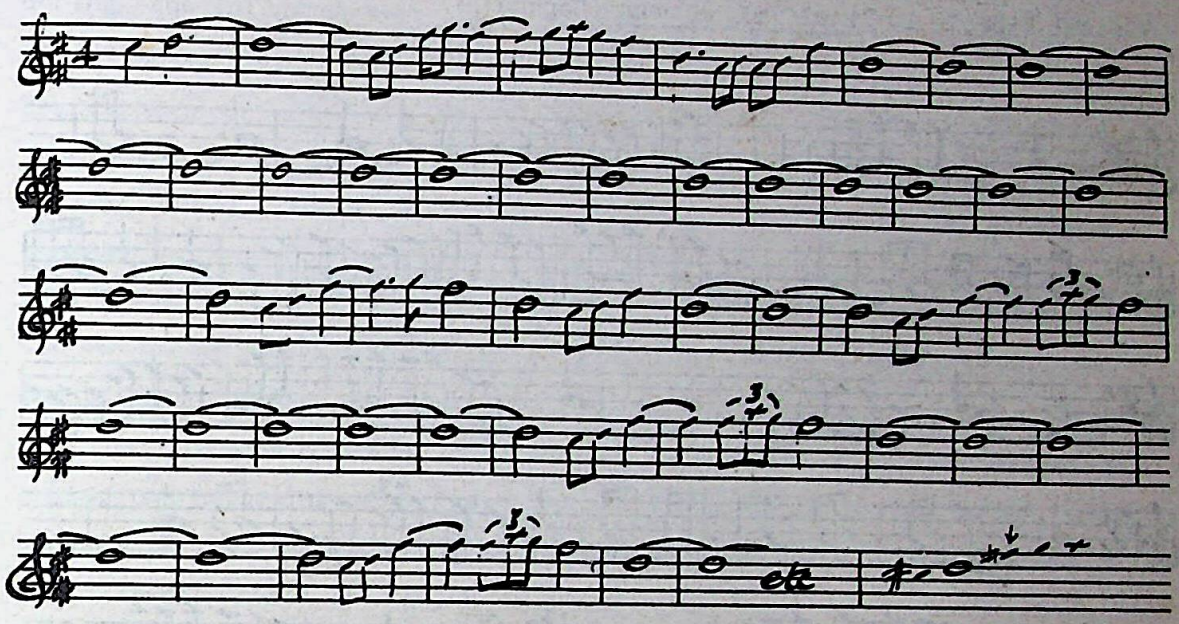
In Central Nepal, the processional music is a medley of popular items, but in East Nepal, there is a special rāg for the groom's procession - the beulo unmāune bākya (groom bringing-out tune), also known as ekcāle' (Musical Example 33), which is played continuously throughout the journey (except where road conditions prohibit playing), upon arrival at the bride's, and during the wedding ceremony.

Musical Example 33: Ekcāle (Beulo unmāune bākya) (Bhojpur)



The arriving party is met at the edge of the village by the bride's party with pañcai bājā, and escorted to her home. The wedding ceremony takes place at night in a specially consecrated area outside the bride's family home (Plate 71), and the pañcai bājā play from a secluded area on the periphery. The wedding guests are feasted, and the groom's party is accommodated in temporary shelters overnight. Meanwhile, at the groom's house, his female relatives have their own party, rateulī, which lasts all night and is characterized by ribald singing, licentious dancing, costuming as males with enormous phalluses and enacting the consummation of the marriage.

On the following day, the groom's party carry the bride back to his home,

• Probably a corruption of ek tāl.

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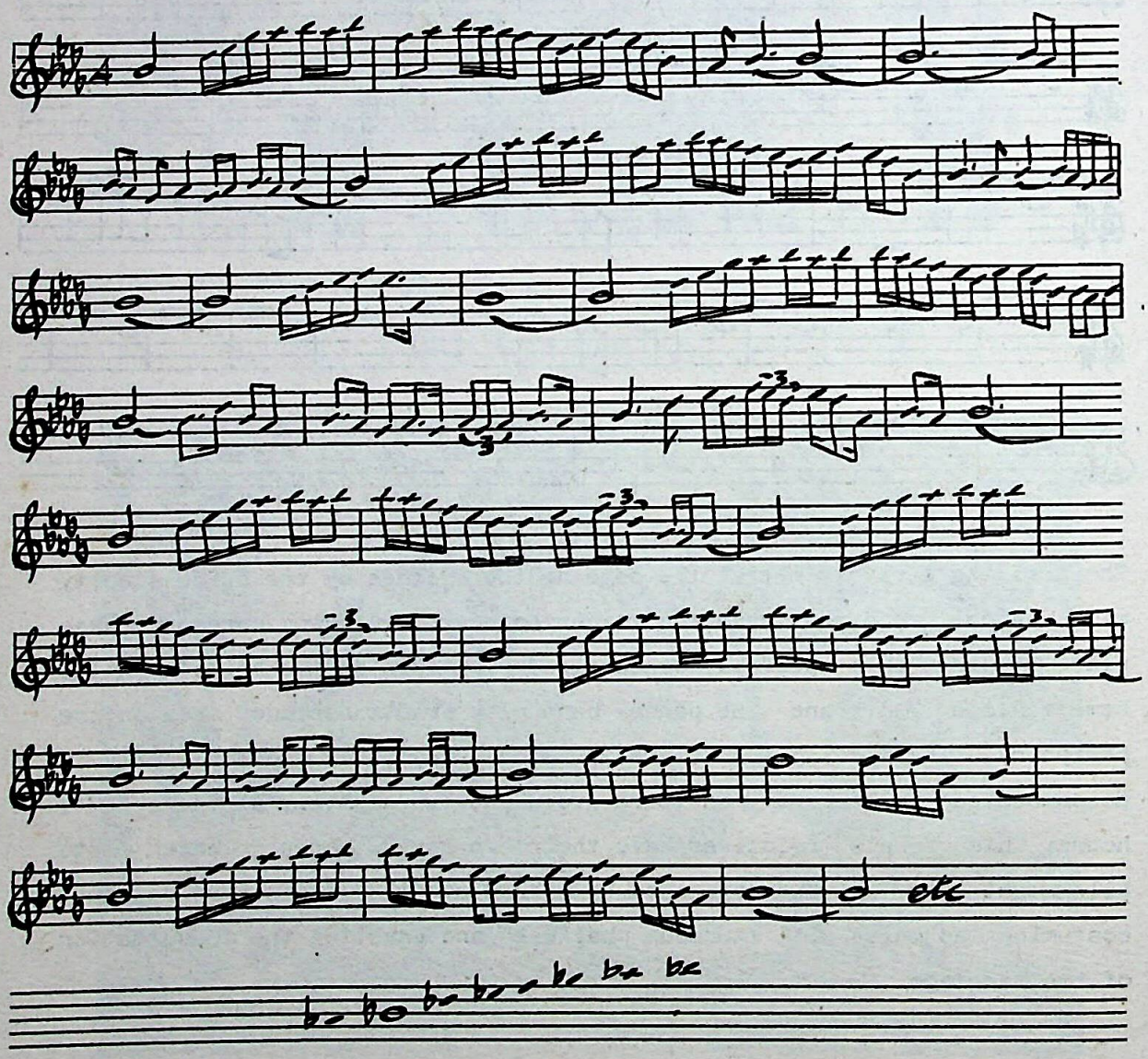
where his female relatives are waiting eagerly to get the first look at her.

In Central Nepal, most of the traditional wedding repertoire has fallen into disuse. The one item which retains its importance is beulī māgne dhūn (bride requesting tune) which is played on the morning after the wedding at the bride's home at the time of her departure with the groom's party (Example 34).

Musical Example 34: Beulī māgne dhūn (Gorkha)



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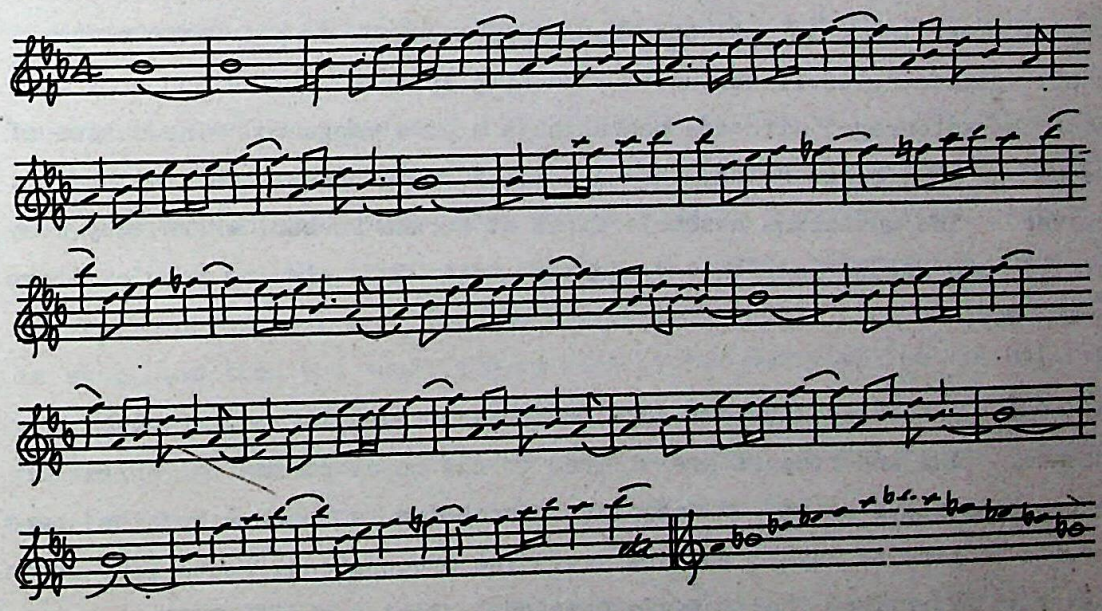
Proficient sahanai players pepper the item with imitations of the bride's weeping, to the amusement of the assembled guests, which may account for its retention in the repertoire.

In Eastern districts, there is a corresponding rag, the beulī unmāune bākya (bride bringing-out tune) or duicāle,[1] given in Example 35. This rāg takes over from the groom's music (ekcāle) from the point in the wedding ceremony when red powder (sindur) is placed in the parting of the bride's hair. The bride's music (duicāle) is played exclusively during the following day, for the departure of the bride and throughout the return journey to the groom's house.

Traditionally, when the bride is taken from her home, her pañcai bājā accompany the entourage to the edge of her village. Previously, in Central Nepal, there was a special rāg for this initial stage of the journey - the beulīko khyāli (bride's khyāli). Today, as with so much of the repertoire, this is replaced by any popular khyāli. Throughout the return procession, a medley of well-known tunes is played, as on the outward journey.

The various ethnic groups of Nepal each have their own rituals for welcoming the bride into the groom's family home, for which the pañcai bājā usually plays, providing entertainment music at the groom's home until the customary feast is served.

Musical Example 35: Duicāle (Beulī unmāune bākya) (Bhojpur)



1. Probably a corruption of dui tāl.

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Civil Occasions

The Nepalese calendar contains a series of national days and state holidays, most of which honour the birthdays of various members of the Royal Family, past and present, who are believed to be the incarnations of deities, and on their birthdays, are respected as such. In Gorkha, these occasions are marked by processions through the town, led by the Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā, pūjās for the Royal Family and speech making. The national days are as follows:

4 Bhadra (August)	Bāla diwas (King's Mother's birthday and National Children's Day)
22 Kartik (Oct/Nov)	Śrī Pañc Baṛā Mahārānī Śubha Janmotsava (Queen's birthday)
1 Pauś (December)	Śrī Pañc Mahendra Jayantī (King's Father's birthday)
14 Pauś (Dec/Jan)	Śrī Pañc Mahārājādhirāj Śubha Janmotsava (King's birthday)
27 Pauś (January)	Śrī Pañc Pṛthvī Jayanti (Pṛthvīnārāyaṇ Śāha's birthday)
7 Phālgun (February)	Śrī Pañc Tribhuvan Jayantī (King's Grandfather's birthday)

Mostly, these occasions begin at the village assembly building (pañcāyat bhavan) at Roṭi Pānī on the south-western side of Gorkha Bajār. From here, a chariot containing the photographs of the honoured personage and of the King and Queen is carried in procession, together with banners bearing the insignia of the groups represented, or patriotic slogans. School children, civil servants, community leaders, police and army comprise the entourage, with the pañcai bājā at the vanguard. The duties of the pañcai bājā begin before the band joins the procession at the bhavan, however. The musicians assemble first at Gorkha Darbār, where they play astūti, and from there they descend to Roṭi Pānī, playing popular items on the way.

Before the processions depart from the bhavan there is a brief pūjā, when incense, ṭīkā and flowers are offered to the royal portraits, whilst the pañcai bājā plays astūti. Once the procession is underway, the band reverts to popular khyāli and jhyāure. The processional route lies in an easterly direction, passing via Dhārāpānī, Rāni Pokharī, Ṭhūlo Āgan and Pāṭicaur, and culminating at the high school (see Map 5), where there is

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a covered platform (like a bandstand) and a flagpole especially for such occasions.

The relative importance of each of these occasions is reflected in the composition of the pañcai bājā, particularly by the number of narsiṅgas employed. Thus, whilst for Bāla diwas only one each of sahanai, damāhā, ḍholaki, jhyāli and narsiṅga comprised the band, for Mahendra Jayantī the band consisted of two sahanais, two damāhā, ḍholaki, jhyāli and four narsiṅgas, and for the King's birthday, the latter ensemble was expanded by the addition of another two narsiṅgas. On the largest of these occasions(i.e. the King's birthday, followed by Mahendra Jayantī), the Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā may be joined by ensembles from the surrounding villages. In 1988, for the King's birthday, pañcai bājā, each with two narsiṅgás, from Phinām, Choprāk, Nāreswār Bothinī and Rānīswārā participated. Choprāk was further represented by a group of Guruṅg singers playing frame drums (khycari) and finger-cymbals (tāḥ). From Bunkoṭ came a group of brahmins playing frame drum (bālan), with rattles (kartāl) and tāḥ to accompany their singing. These music groups were dispersed throughout the procession, with the army band bringing up the rear.

Additionally, the fees for the bands vary in relation to the significance of the event, from Rs.50/- to Rs.200/- per band. The Gorakhkāli pañcai bājā for these occasions is arranged through Gorkha Darbār, the Kālikā ensemble nagarci assuming the role of nāike. He draws most of the members from the Darbār personnel, supplementing them with musicians from Gorkha. The instruments used are not those of the Darbār, but the musicians' own.

Having arrived at the high school, the pañcai bājā is required to play astūti in front of the platform at all the significant moments during the ceremony, whilst other music groups play any popular item. Astūti is played first for the raising of the Nepalese flag, after which there is a military parade of arms (on the bigger occasions). The national anthem is sung, and then the music groups play continuously whilst the officials assembled on the platform pay obeisance to the royal portraits. The celebrations are concluded with patriotic speeches, on the King's birthday, supplemented by other nationalistic entertainments.

On National Children's Day, the procession begins from a Gorkha primary

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school (Bāla Mandir) and makes a circuit of the local schools before proceeding to the high school. The birthday procession for Pṛthvinārāyaṇ Śāha, the founder of modern Nepal, is exceptional in that it goes from the Tallo Darbār in Gorkha Bajār to the Rāja Darbār. Apart from the raising of the flag, the ceremony follows the same pattern as those of the other national days, and is held in the courtyard in front of the Rāja Darbār. At the end of the ceremony, Gorakhnāth's bread is distributed as a ritual gift (ṛasād) and the pañcai bājā receive no other payment.

Another civil occasion on which the pañcai bājā is employed is for the victory procession of the successful candidate in the five-yearly local government election (sawapatiko chunab). In 1987, the pañcai bājā was joined by a band of clarinet, two trumpets, snare drum (tamār), tenor drum (ḍhol) and a pair of maraccas (rāmā). Having been presented with a white turban, flower garlands and ṭīkā, to the accompaniment of astūti, the victor made a processional circuit of the town, starting from the local government office (jillā kārayalaya) and proceeding in a clockwise direction, led by the two ensembles playing the popular repertoire.

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Conclusion

The work of the pancai bājā is inextricably bound up with the devotional and agricultural year. Previously, the repertoire reflected the calendrical cycle much more closely than it does today, with the wide use of seasonal rāgas such as basanta for the start of spring in Māgh (Jan-Feb), phāgu for Phālgun-Cait (Feb-April), asare for Jyeṣṭha-Sravan (May-Aug), malaśrī for Āśvin (Sept-Oct), and possibly others which have faded from the memories of this generation of musicians altogether. These days, more often than not, popular folk or film tunes replace these auspicious traditional rāgs, asāre and malasrī being the only two seasonal rāgs which are still regularly played during the appropriate seasons.

In the Gorkha area, during the course of a single generation, a whole repertoire has been lost. The older, experienced musicians of Gorkha relate that for weddings traditionally, a sequence of folk rāgs would be played, each related to a specific time of day and bestowing propitious blessings on the nuptial couple. These included the rāgs listed in Table 5 with their appropriate timings:

Table 5: Traditional Folk-Rāgs of Central Nepal

Rāg	Timing (Gorkha)	Timing (Jamruṅg)
Saraṅga	2.00-3.00pm	Afternoon and early evening
Thālanī	Anytime - starting rāg	
Belā rāg	7.00am After sunrise	Half-light (sunset to dusk)
Arun barun	4.30-5.00am 8.00am (after pūjā)	Half-light of morning
Kalyan	10.00am	
Bibhag	From 4.00am	
Bibhas		
Bimal	From 5.00am (after bibhag) Early morning	
Rāmkoli	Anytime	About 8.00am
Sājhe	Sunset	Sunset
Sostani	4.00-5.00pm	
Maṅgal dhūn		Evening and sunset
Ārati	Evening	First light of morning

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The times for the performance of these rāgs were mentioned by Gorkha and Jamruṅg Darbār musicians. There is some discrepancy in the timings given for certain items, which may have been partly due to regional variation in the use of these rāgs, but a more likely explanation is that their appropriate usage has become obscure. Only one traditional wedding item - beulī māgne dhūn - has retained its place in the current Gorkha repertoire. Younger musicians are unable to play the other traditional rāgs and, on the whole, do not even know their names or recognize the sound of them. As with the seasonal repertoire, they have been succeeded by pure entertainment music - modern folk-songs and film tunes augmenting the established repertoire of jhyāure and khyāli instrumental music.

The decline of the traditional repertoire is going hand-in-hand with a corresponding change in function of the band, but whether the change in function was the catalyst for or is the consequence of the impoverishment of the repertoire is debatable. The repertoire and functions of the ritual ensembles are more resilient to change due to the restraints imposed by the rigid ritual procedures that the music complements. The concept of the pañcai bājā as a 'saitko bājā' (an auspicious band) seems to have become a secondary factor in the role of the band. When questioned as to the role of the pañcai bājā at weddings, the standard answer of today's younger musicians is 'ramailo garne' - to make it pleasant, enjoyable, whilst older musicians still use the phrase 'saitko lagi' - 'for good luck'.

Regarding the claim to an entertainment function, the question arises of entertainment for whom? Despite the entertainment value claimed by the musicians, at wedding feasts, the pañcai bājā is often competing with (and defeated by) amplified Hindipop or commercial vamped-up recordings of Nepali 'folk-songs'. Wedding guests appear to pay little attention to the music of the hired band, and it is the musicians themselves who derive most pleasure from their music (especially after a few glasses of raksi)! They may pass the whole night singing and dancing on the periphery of the wedding activity. Indeed, the liveliest weddings are those of the damāi themselves, when there is no delineation of roles between those of 'guest' and 'musician', most of the males participating in the music-making at some time during the event, and even women may be persuaded to sing duets (dohari gīt) or to dance.

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The band also functions in a signalling capacity, announcing to the local population that an event is taking place. The instruments, in particular damāhā and narsiṅga, ring across the hills, and the approach of a pañcai bājā can be heard for miles. This signalling function may be shared by shotguns, fired at strategic points en route, for both wedding processions and the ritual journeys of deities, for example, Gorkha Darbār's phūlpātī procession and Nuwakot's Bhairavī jātrā, and to mark the highlights of rituals, such as the sacrifice of each of the government buffaloes at Gorkha during dasaĩ.

Gorkha damāi recognize the playing styles of bands of the surrounding villages, and thus, can pinpoint the place of origin of grooms coming to marry in Gorkha. Whenever a processional band is heard, it attracts attention, the enquiring minds of villagers wanting to be satisfied as to what is happening, who is involved, and on what scale the event is being celebrated.

For the higher caste patrons of the band, the primary function of the pañcai bājā appears to be to act as a status symbol, the social and economic standing of the patrons being reflected not by the quality of musicianship of a celebrated player or by the appeal or propitiousness of the repertoire, but by the size of the bands that play at their sons' weddings. 'Modern' (Western) band instruments carry greater prestige value than the 'old fashioned' pañcai bājā, and possibly, in the not-too-distant future, the traditional ensemble will be dispensed with in favour of clarinets, trumpets, euphoniums, side, bass and tenor drums, and maraccas, as in the Kathmandu Valley. Pañcai bājā patrons were found to have scant knowledge of the band, and almost without exception, were totally ignorant of the traditional auspicious rāgs which have been lost. The most frequent reason given by patrons for having a pañcai bājā at a wedding is 'It's our tradition' (hāmro calan cha).

Status symbols are temporary reflections of current fashions. Once popularized, they cease to function as status symbols, and some novel replacement succeeds. Hence, modernism is demanded of the pañcai bājā in the form of the latest film tunes and Western-style band instruments. In a society in which traditional values are changing, an ensemble like the pañcai bājā faces tough competition. The portable stereo cassette

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player has replaced the wrist watch as a prestigious symbol, along with other consumer goods. Occasionally, one may witness processions in which the ensemble has been replaced by a cassette tape of popular pañcai bājā music. If the status value of the band is undermined by that of the 'boogie-box', the demise of the pancai bājā can be predicted with certainty.

However, vestiges of the old concept of the auspicious role of the damāi remain, being most apparent in relatively small-scale celebrations. For example, the ritual presentation of the wedding clothes by the family tailor, when the alliance (symbolized by the clothes) receives his auspicious blessings. Similarly, the health and welfare of a baby may be secured by the blessings of the damāi on the occasion of being fed its first rice.

For small-scale celebrations a complete pañcai bājā may not be required, but however limited the contribution of the damāi, still his presence is demanded. For example, during the celebration of vratabandha, the procession of the young boy from his home to the shrine of his protecting deity must be led by pañcai bājā. One wealthy Gorkha brāhmin family lived only two minutes away from the shrine to be visited by the boy. All the ritual requirements of the journey were rigidly observed, with the pañcai bājā being represented by one diminutive boy playing ṭyāmko at the head of the procession. In examples such as these, the role of the musician could not be considered as either that of entertainer or status symbol, he could only have been fulfilling a ritual function.

The pañcai bājā is, essentially, a processional band. Most of the occasions for which it plays involve the migration of people or gods from one ritually significant area to another. In the case of humans, during pūjās and vratabandha, the journey is between home and shrine, and for weddings, between the homes of groom and bride. In the case of deities, the journey may be between shrines (e.g. the shifting of Kālikā during dasaĩ; Bhairavī's journey from Nuwākoṭ to Devīghāṭ), or between the shrine and the homes of local people on the ritual circuit from which offerings are received (e.g. Bhimsen jātrā, Krsna dahi jātrā) The pancai bājā links together through the medium of propitious music, otherwise disparate areas of ritual significance, and temporarily con-

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secrates the ground between them. The music provides an auspicious aura in which the ritual personnel and/or deities may move between hallowed areas, protected from the threat of malevolent forces. The journeys undertaken during rites de passage may be seen as the physical manifestations of the spiritual distance covered by an individual in crossing from one of the Hindu stages of life to the next. At these times, the individual is particularly vulnerable, and needs the auspicious environment created by the pañcai bājā as a safe-guard from the forces of evil.

The ritual processions (jātrā) of festivals such as Kṛṣṇa jātrā and Bhimsen jātrā are along a prescribed route which makes a complete clockwise circuit (pradakṣiṇā) of Gorkha Bajār, like those of Newār settlements of the Kathmandu Valley. A pradakṣiṇā is an act of reverance which defines a ritual object or space as a unit worthy of veneration. Speaking of Bhaktapur, Gutschow observes that:

> the pradakshina has to be understood as an integrating force. Circumambulating the whole town would define the inner space as a unity, a homogeneous object which attracts undivided worship... the pradakshina could... be understood as a means of overcoming differences. Unity is a result achieved through ritual.
>
> (Gutschow 1980:62)

In this context, the role of the pañcai bājā may be interpreted as that of social integrator, unifying the heterogeneous communities of the town through ritual music.

Thus, the pañcai bājā functions in a variety of capacities, and there is a distinction to be made between how the musicians see their role (as entertainers and luck-bringers) and how this is interpreted by society at large - the band may be used merely as a means of ostentation. If the latter view predominates at the expense of the former, the pañcai bājā faces the risk of becoming an anachronism and gradually fading from Nepalese village life.

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7

RITUAL ENSEMBLES

Throughout Nepal, the damai are employed as temple musicians at Sivaite and Devī temples. Exceptionally, they also play at Vaiṣṇava temples (eg. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Bhojpur, and on specific occasions at the Gorkha Murālighār Nārāyaṇa temple). The composition of the ensembles (nagārā bānā) varies considerably (see Chapter 3), but the ritual duties of the musicans (nagarci) follow a reasonably uniform pattern. Generally, ritual music is required twice a day to accompany the morning offerings (nitya or nim pūjā) and the evening ritual of lighting oil-wick lamps (batti) in the shrines at sunset (sā̃jh or ārati pūjā).

Ritual music accompanies blood sacrifices at Devī temples, for both the propitiation and sacrifice of goats, buffaloes and sheep provided by the guṭhis, and occasionally, for the larger private sacrifices made by the general public, such as buffaloes or five-offerings (pañca bali). The festival calendars of temples vary, but music is an essential accompaniment for many of the special rites observed at these events. Examples include the replacement of the banners (nisān) at Caite and ṭhūlo dasaĩ at Gorkha Darbār and on Kartik purṇimā at Manakāmanā; the planting of barley seed (jamara) on the first day of dasaĩ at many temples. Some temple festivals include ritual processions (jātrā) to, from or between shrines, which are led by the ritual musicians, for example, establishing the phūlpātī at Gorkha Kālikā Darbār, Manakāmanā and Nuwākoṭ Bhairavī temple; the Nuwākoṭ to Devīghāṭ Bhairavī jātrā; the procession to the

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nearby Bhagawatī shrine from Manakāmanā at Kartik purṇimā.

Musicians usually play outside the door of the shrine, unless special provision has been made, such as the pavilions (pāṭī) at Gorkha Darbār, or the plinths for the nagārā at Manakāmanā. From their position at the doorway, the musicians are able to observe the progress of the ritual taking place within, and time their playing accordingly, to provide music for the duration of the ritual activity. When this is not the case (as at Gorkha Darbār), the signal to play may come from the officiating priest or his helper (susāre), and the musical requirements for any ritual are specified.

Nagārā bānā which include sahanai play one item only - the rāg rāsa - but this varies considerably from shrine to shrine. It does have a distinguishing feature, however. Whilst in the music of the popular repertoire there is usually a return to the tonic note at the end of each phrase, in rāsa phrases cadence on various pitches. Commonly, these cadences outline an overall stepwise descent through a perfect fourth or fifth to the tonic (Musical Examples 36 and 37).

Similarly, the nagārā patterns vary between shrines, whilst following the same general outline. They begin with a slow steady beat which then accelerates into a drum roll, subsequently returning to a slightly faster tempo than the original one. This pattern is repeated for the duration of the pūjā, so that there is a gradual overall acceleration.

Temple pañcai bājās have repertoires of seasonal rāgs, particularly in association with the major annual festival, ṭhūlo dasaĩ.

At Gorkha Darbār, the two principal deities - Kālikā and Gorakhnāth - have their own nagārā bānās, the former also having a pañcai bājā at her disposal (see Chapter 3). A description of the music and rituals performed on behalf of these deities will serve to illustrate the type of ritual activities in which the nagarcis are involved.

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Music and Ritual for Gorakhnāth (Gorkha)

At Gorkha Darbār, Gorakhnāth is honoured twice daily by the Kanphaṭā jogis who serve him, with offerings of bread each morning (roṭ carāune pūjā) and oil-wick lamps each evening (sājh pūjā or ārati). Both pūjās take place in Gorakhnāth's cave shrine, and are accompanied by his five-piece ensemble (nagārā, rāsa, karnāl, kāhal and dhop bānā) which plays from a pavilion - the Gorakhpāṭī - just below the shrine (marked G on Site Plan of Darbar).

The music for Gorakhnāth is unchanging throughout the year. It is measured in terms of the number of murrā or laṛi played by the nagārā, that is, the number of accelerations into drum rolls, within an overall gradual acceleration, as described above. The musicians identify two types of murrā: khasro (rough, coarse), which are accelerations from the initial slow tempi, and masino (fine), the drum rolls which are produced from the faster tempi towards the middle and end of playing. Theoretically, only odd numbers of murrā are sounded - most commonly nine murrā, comprised three khasro and three-plus-three masino, seven murrā, comprised two khasro and five masino, and five murrā, consisting of two khasro and three masino. These tend to be ideals rather than realities, the nagarci supplying an extra two or three murrā occasionally. The sahanai plays the distinctive rāg rāsa (Musical example 36), accompanied by sporadic blasts of karnāl, kāhal and dhop bānā. Frequently, the complete ensemble is not present - the only indispensible instrument being the nagārā.

The construction of rāsa, as played for Gorakhnāth, is particularly interesting. It is characterized by a motivic cell comprised the notes D-Eb-B-D which recurs throughout. As usual with rāṣa, the phrases do not all cadence on the tonic, and in this example, the tonic note (B) is not reached cadentially until the middle of the piece. Ten of the twelve phrases come to rest on one of the notes of the melodic motif; D, Eb or B so that these notes are significant at both surface and deep structural levels. As in Kālikā's rāsa and chasore maṅgal, two-thirds of the way through the melodic material is centred on the upper tonic, in the form of an antara. The rāg is played in free rhythm in a flowing style.

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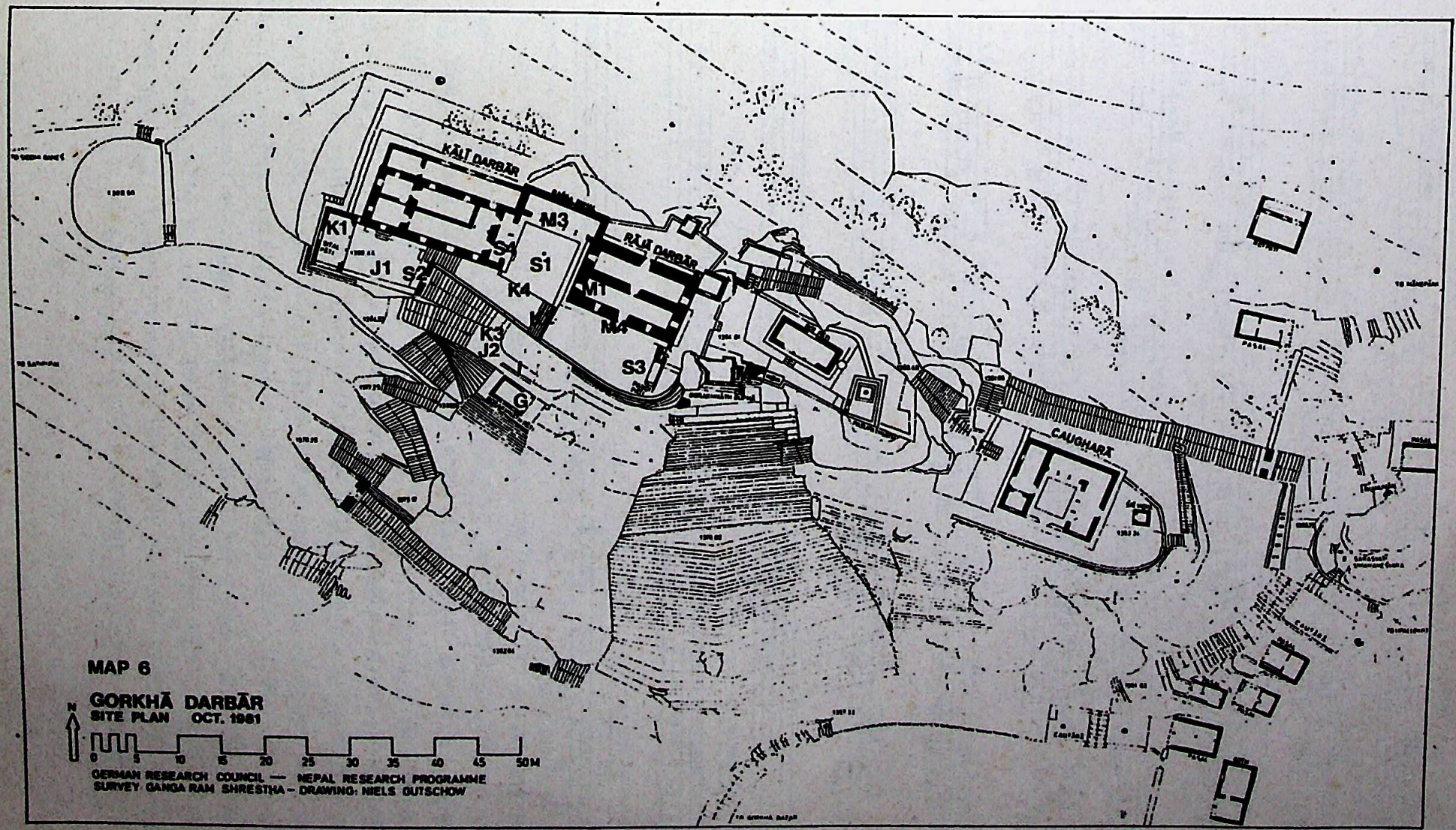

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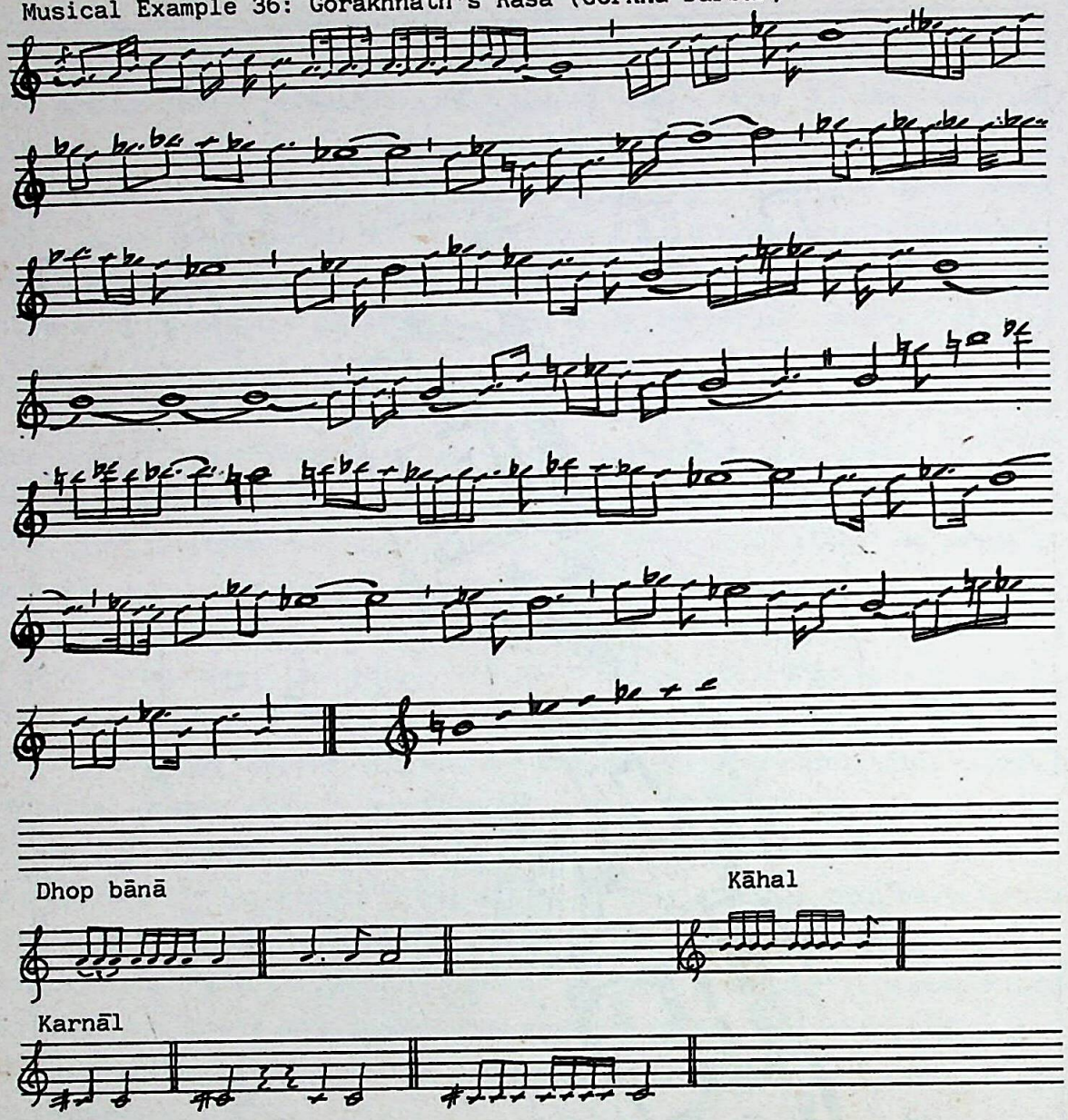
Musical Example 36: Gorakhnāth's Rāsa (Gorkha Darbār)



The time of the offering of bread (roṭ carāune) is variable, according to the number of devotees who come to pay obeisance to Gorakhnāth. It may take place at any time from about eleven o'clock in the morning, and the musicians have to be in attendance at the Gorakhpāṭī in order to play when needed. Each morning devotees bring their offerings to the jogis at the fire pavilion (dhunī pāṭī). Apart from money, rice, flowers, incense etc., quantities of oil, rice- and wheat-flour are offered which are made into bread - small cakes (ṭāī) cooked in clarified butter, and large flat loaves (bhuṅgro) baked directly in the fire. When the bread has been baked, it is taken with consecrated water and all the offerings (which have been sorted to type) to Gorakhnāth's cave shrine. First, holy water is sprinkled, and then the sacred formula ūṃ is written on the shrine,

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offerings of rice and flowers are made, the oil wicks are lit and the incense burnt. Ūṃ is written on the bread, and then, whilst blowing on his siṅgnād (a small whistle made of horn), the officiating jogi cuts out the middles of the loaves of bread and offers them to Gorakhnāth, together with ṭīkā. Water is sprinkled again, and then a small bell (ghaṇṭa) is rung whilst incense is wafted in the air and a five-wick lamp is waved above the shrine, accompanied by the sound of Śiva's hour-glass pellet drum, the ḍamaru, and ghaṇṭa. The ringing of the bells hanging above the shrine signals the musicians to 'stand-by'. The ḍamaru and ghaṇṭa are sounded again, and finally the blowing of the nāth, a straight conical bore natural horn (see Plate 55), signals the Gorakhnāth ensemble to begin playing. After the pūjā devotees and the musicians receive pieces of Gorakhnāth's bread, ṭīkā and other offerings as a ritual gift.

The evening pūjā takes place at sunset, when wick lights and incense are offered to the deity, for which rāsa and seven murrā on the nagārā are required. Once again, the sounding of the nāth signals the players to commence.

Twice a year there is a deviation from this routine. During the month of Śrāvaṇ (July-August), there is a four-day celebration, bhaṇḍāra aūsi, the kul-devatāpūjā (for Bhairav) of the jogis, combined with their feasting by the Darbār. On each day, the Gorakhnāth ensemble is required to play five times (and again for the evening pūjā), to accompany specific parts of the ritual. Before the bread is offered to Gorakhnāth, there is a reading (pūjā pāṭh) of the jogi's sacred text, the Gorakṣa Sahasranāma ('1000 names'), 'a book on the 1000 names of Kṛṣṇa while he was employed as a shepherd in Vajra' (Briggs 1982:253), in Gorakhnāth's cave. Nine murrā and rāsa are played to accompany this pūjā, which is followed immediately by the offering of bread, as usual, accompanied by another nine murrā and rāsa. The pūjā for Bhairav takes place in a specially prepared square in front of the house of the king's representative (his uncle) who runs the Darbār. Here, a flat stone is consecrated with cow-dung, and has a trident (trisul) from Gorakhnāth's cave placed before it to create a temporary shrine. To one side, a small mound of cow-dung with a maṇḍala drawn in rice-flour (rekhi) provides the sacrificial altar. Offerings of flowers, small strips of red and white cloth, curd, rice, ṭīkā, etc. are made, whilst a Magar helper (susāre) sounds the ghaṇṭa and

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ḍamaru, which stop for the subsequent offering of Gorakhnāth's bread to Bhairav. They are sounded again when a small oil lamp is waved over the shrine. As soon as this is done, the nāth announces the commencement of the animal sacrifice, its blast signalling the musicians in the Gorakhpāṭī to begin playing. Their music - rāsa and five murrā - accompanies the propitiation of a piglet and two goats, rather than their sacrifice. Each is annointed with ṭīkā, consecrated water and flowers, and following its decapitation, the nāth is blown and the Gorakhpāṭī musicians begin playing for the ensuing propitiation. The sacrifices having been completed, the heads of the animals are offered to Bhairav and the carcasses are cooked for the jogis' feast.

To summarize: for each of the four days of bhaṇḍāra aũsi, Gorakhnāth's nagārā bānā plays

9 murrā for the reading of the Gorakṣa Sahasranāma (pūjā pāṭh)
9 murrā " " offering of bread to Gorakhnāth (roṭ caṛāune pūjā)
5 murrā " " propitiation of a piglet (suṅgur manāune)
5 murrā " " " " the 1st goat (bokā manāune)
5 murrā " " " " " 2nd goat
7 murrā " " evening pūjā (sẽjh pūjā)

The other occasion on which the routine of the Gorakhnāth pūjā is broken is during dasaĩ, for the fifteen days of which, bread is not offered. Instead, there are readings (pūjā pāṭh) and daily offerings of flowers, rice, ṭīkā, etc. (nitya pūjā), for each of which the nagārā bānā plays nine murrā and rāsa. The evening pūjā proceeds uninterrupted. On the full moon (purṇimā) at the end of dasaĩ the offering of bread recommences preceded by a pūjā pāṭh, each accompanied by nine murrā and rāsa. These rites are followed by the propitiation and sacrifice of a goat in honour of Bhairav. It is propitiated in Gorakhnāth's cave (without musical accompaniment) and is dispatched and disembowelled at Bhairav's shrine immediately above the cave. For the sacrifice, two gun shots and seven murrā and rāsa from the nagārā bānā are sounded. The head of the goat is taken into the cave, and the nagarci receives its tail. The following day the normal ritual pattern is resumed, as described above.

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Music and Ritual for Kālikā

Within the Gorkha Darbār complex Kālikā, kul-devatā of the Śāha kings, has her own palace facing the Rāja Darbār (see Darbār Site Plan, overleaf), although for most of the year she occupies an attic room (kailaś koṭha) in the latter. Every fifteen days, on the eighth day (aṣṭamī) of the lunar calendar, her devotees satisfy her lust for blood, with the sacrifice of goats, chickens and other animals, a tradition which was inaugurated by the Śāha family in 1799. Two important annual festivals are held in her honour, cāite and thūlo dasaĩ, the latter being the biggest and most elaborate festival of the Nepalese calendar.

Music accompanies many parts of her Tantric rites, Kālikā having her own ensemble of nagārā, two rāsa, karnāl, dhop bānā, kāhal, sikhār, bijuli bānā and bheri, in addition to the Darbār pañcai bājā. Her music reflects the complexity of the ritual it accompanies, the two ensembles operating independently of one another, each having specific functions within the ritual framework.

Kālikā's ensemble is closely related to that of Gorakhnāth - not only do they have instruments in common, but the music is measured in terms of the number of murrā played by the nagārā, and the sahanais of both ensembles consistently play one rāg, rāsa. (The name rāsa is used for both the rāg and the sahanai that plays it). As with Gorakhnāth's nagārā bānā, odd numbers of murrā are always played, for example, three sets of nine murrā at each aṣṭamī, nine murrā for each of the most important sacrifices at dasaĩ, five murrā for buffaloes other than the biggest and the smallest, sacrificed at dasaĩ, and for the ārati pūjās performed for Kālikā between the first and seventh days of dasaĩ (ghaṭasthāpanā to phūlpātī), and twenty-seven sets of three murrā for the secret śaṅkha dhuni ritual at dasaĩ.

Kālikā's rāsa shares some of the features of that of Gorakhnāth. As with Gorakhnāth's rāsa, Kālikā's is characterized by a melodic cell: C#-D-A-C#, the notes of which are structurally significant. In the first part of rāsa (A), successive phrases cadence on descending degrees of the mode: E-D-C#-A-G-F. In part B, the five phrases cadence on the notes of the motif: C#-D-C#-A-A. Part C is like an antara, the cadence points marking out a descent from the upper tonic (a) via g and D to E, from

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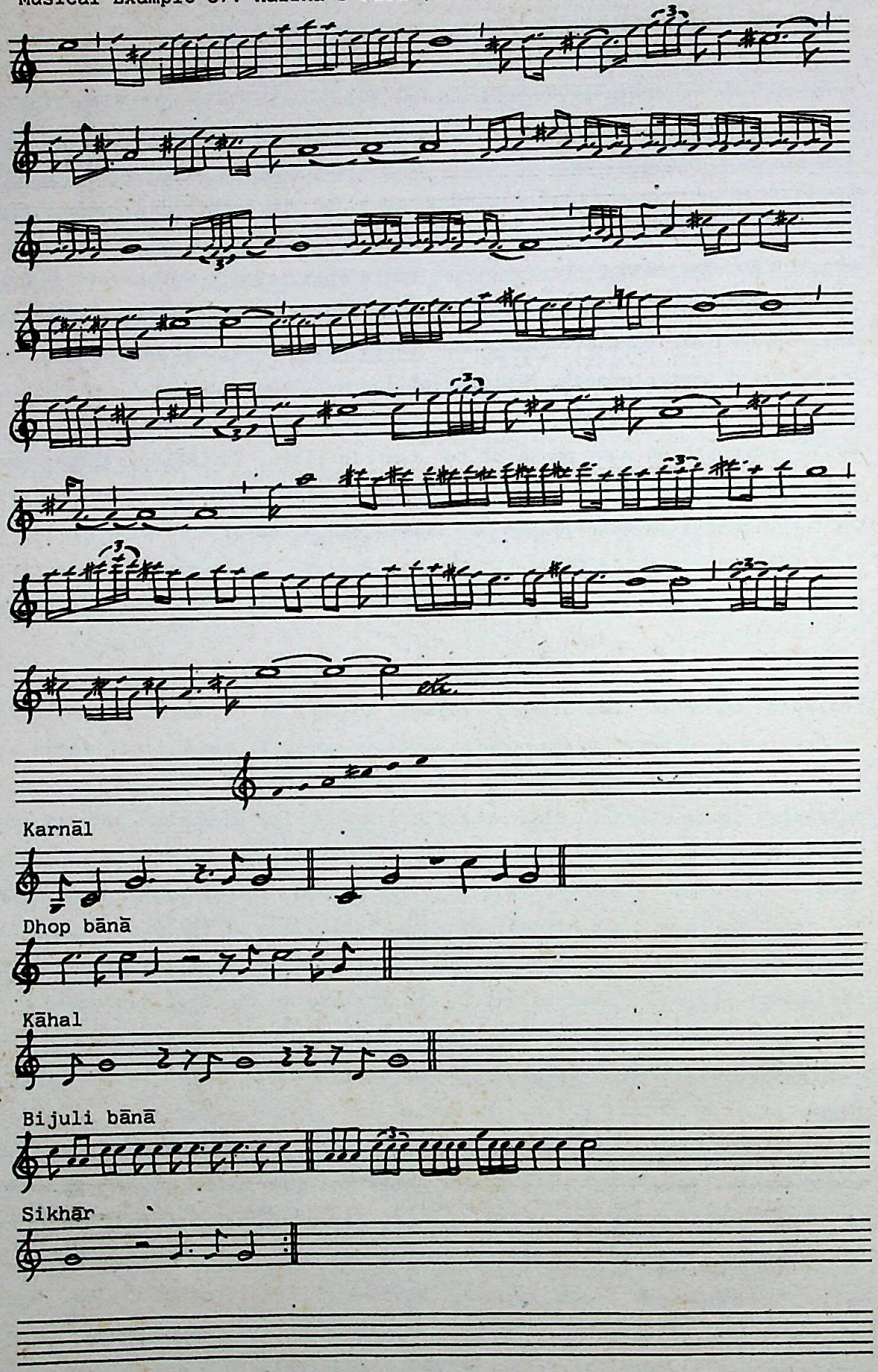
Musical Example 37: Kālikā's rāsa (Gorkha Darbār)



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which point the structure repeats that of part A (Musical Example 37). Rāsa proceeds until the nagārā's murrā have been completed.

The pañcai bājā claims to employ thirty-six rāgas, but, unless twenty-nine of these have vanished from the repertoire, this must represent an 'ideal number' (as with the '36 jāt' as Höfer suggests), as the current repertoire is comprised no more than seven rāgs, each of which has a specific ritual function:

Chasore maṅgal:	auspicious rāg for general use
Asāre:	rāg for rice-transplanting season and for rain-making rites
malaśrī:	seasonal rāg for dasaĩ
Navagā:	sacrificial rāg for Caite and thūlo dasaĩ
Sattār kāṭne bākya:	sacrificial rāg for the biggest buffalo at dasaĩ (sattār)
Phāgu:	played on Vijayā daśamī for the playing with colour (phāgu khelne)
Cãcari:	played on Vijayā daśamī on the return to the Darbār after the disposal of the phūlpātī

There are no obvious gaps in the repertoire, apart from a separate rāg to be played for the preparation of sacrificial areas. At Jamruṅg Darbār, Dhādiṅg, the pañcai bājā repertoire includes māru, or the rekhi hālne bākya, a rāg played during the marking out of maṇḍalas with rice-flour (rekhi) (Musical Example 38). At Gorkha Darbār navagā is played for this purpose. It is possible that chasore maṅgal has taken over the function of older specific rāgs, but it seems highly improbable that such a vast proportion of the repertoire could be lost without trace.

For most of the year, the pañcai bājā plays chasore maṅgal 'auspicious six-sound' - that is, an auspicious piece based on a tonic (G) which is produced by closing six holes of the sahanai (Musical Example 39). As with the various forms of rāsa, the phrases of chasore maṅgal do not persistently cadence on the tonic. In the latter, the four notes C-B-A-G

1. 'Cār warṇa chattis jāt ("the four varṇa and the 36 castes"), seems to be meant to denote the totality of the castes... The number 36 stands symbolically for the multitude of individual castes and certainly lacks empirical evidence' (Höfer 1979:115). The musicians also used the number 36 in connection with the metals used in the forging of the bowl of the Kālikā nagārā (there are five metals - the pañca dhātu), and the number of forts (koṭ) in the Gorkha district before unification.

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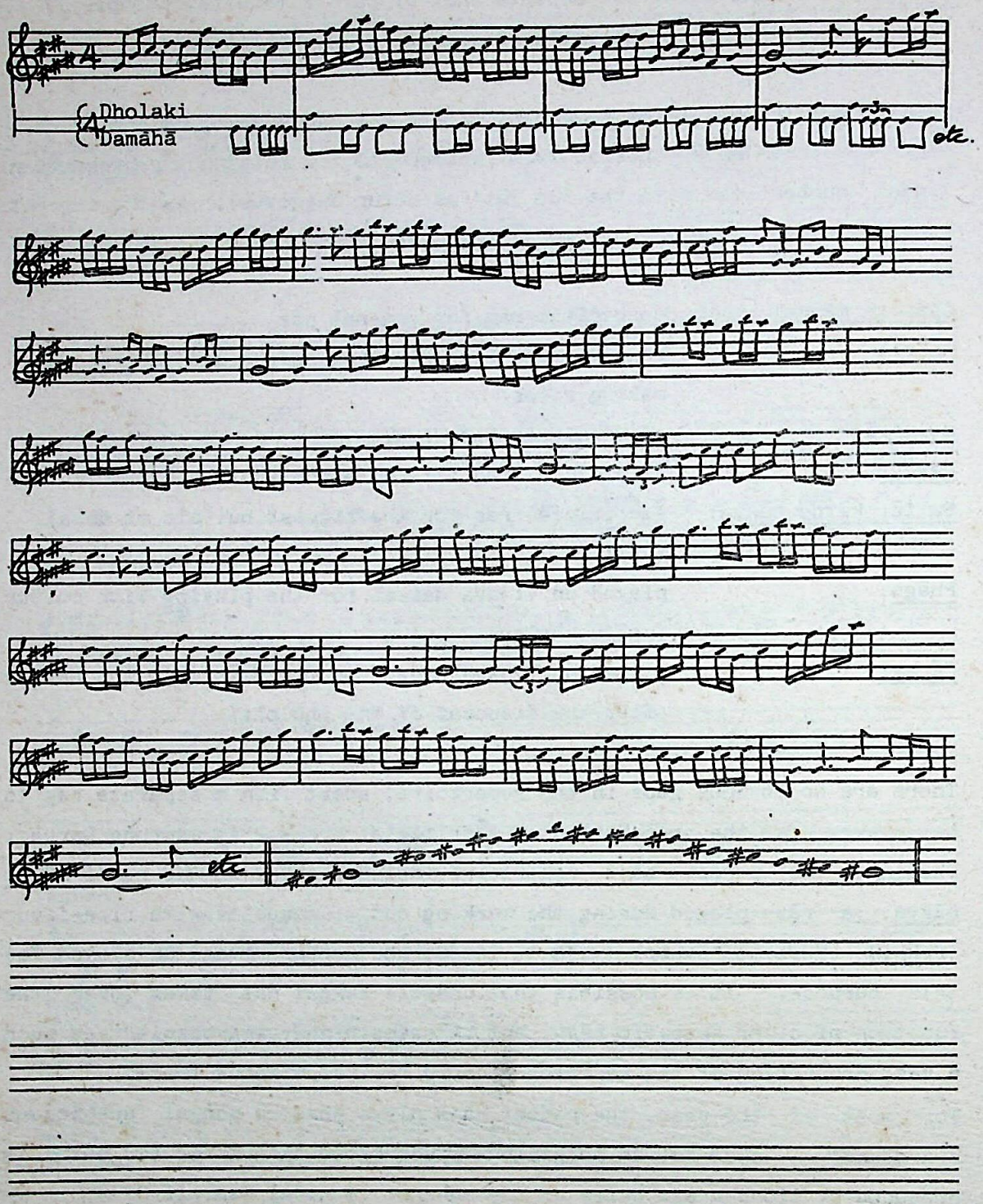
Musical Example 38: Māru (rekhi hālne bākya) (Jamruṅg Darbār, Dhāḍiṅg)



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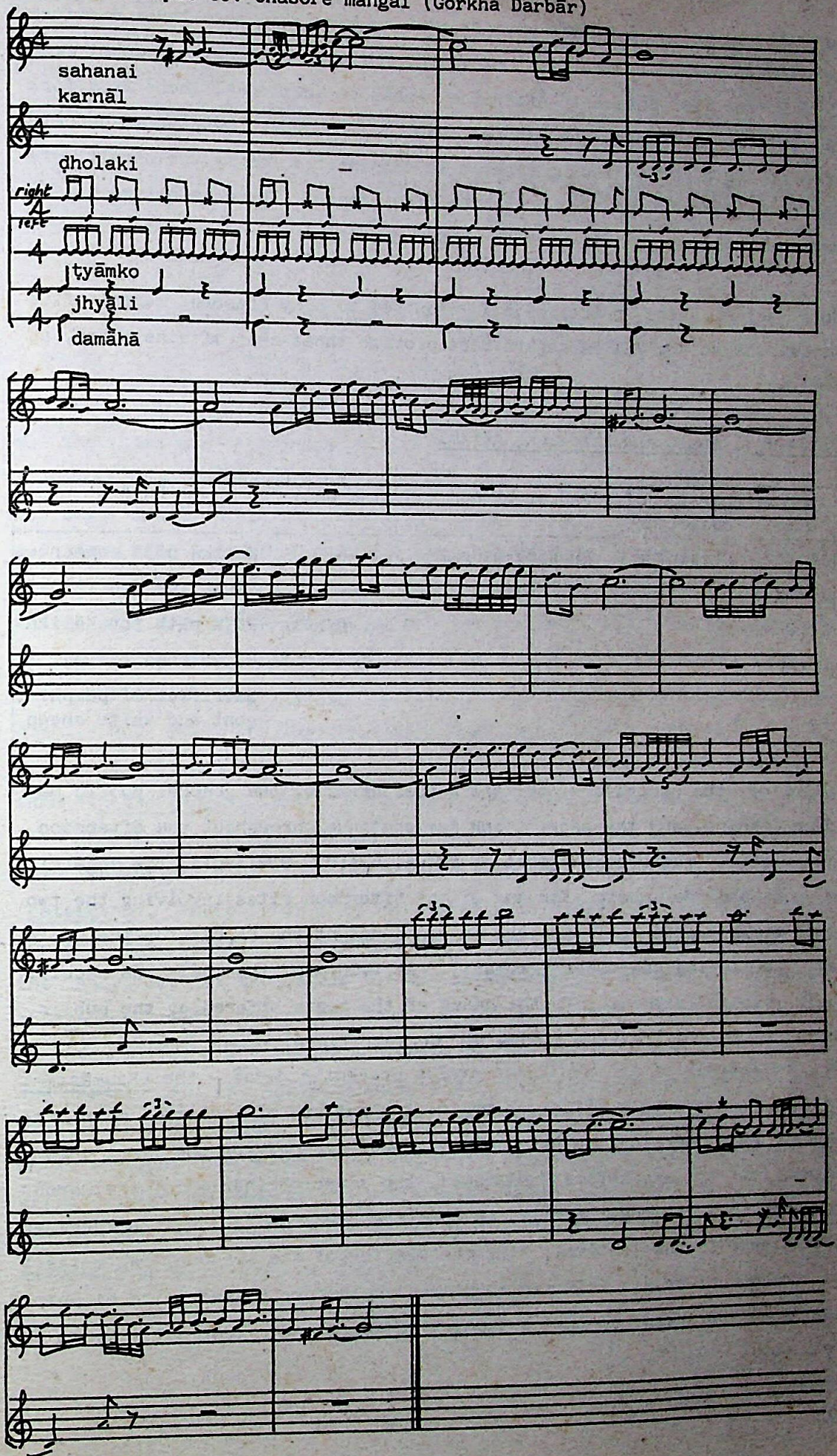
Musical Example 39: Chasore maṅgal (Gorkha Darbār)



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are structurally significant. Chasore maṅgal falls into three distinct sections, A-A-B, in the first of which, there is a stepwise descent from C to G over four phrases. After the repeat of section A, there is a form of antara, in which the sahanai leaps to the upper register to descend from b to g. The missing upper c is compensated for by the penultimate phrase cadencing on C before the final tonic. There is a tendency to extreme sharpness of pitch in the upper register.

Each aṣṭamī, the pañcai bājā is required to play chasore maṅgal five times, whilst the Kālikā nagārā bānā provide three sets of nine murrā, as follows:

Table 6 : Music and Ritual at Aṣṭamī

Approx. time	Location of musicians	Pañcai bājā	Kālikā bānā	Pūjā
10.45	Sitalpāṭī	Chasore maṅgal	--	Kālikā pūjā commences
11.00	"	" "	--	Ṭīkā given to Kālikā
12.00	"	" "	9 murrā/rāsa	Pūjā pāṭh for Kālikā
12.15	"	" "	" " "	Nitya pūjā
1.00	"	" "	" " "	Sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and white sheep

Following the sacrifice of the Darbār animals, the general public may offer theirs, and the sacrificing may continue throughout the afternoon, but without the accompaniment of ritual music. Similarly, the nagarcis do not provide music for any of the afternoon rites involving the two young girls (kanyā keṭī) who are in residence at the Darbār for the whole day, as 'living goddesses' (kumāri). At 5.00 p.m. the musicians receive their ritual payment of the heads of the goats offered by the public, which are thrown from the window of the sacrificial room.

On the aṣṭamīs of the two lunar cycles preceding dasaĩ - the bhaumāṣṭamı vratam - there is a slight change to the pattern of aṣṭamī, when the pañcai bājā heralds the start of the dasaĩ season. on the first bhaumāṣṭamī (thirty days before Mahāṣṭamī), the director (hākim) of the Darbār representing the royal family, invites the brāhmins and their helpers to participate in the festival, with the playing of the seasonal rāg malaśrī by the pañcai bājā. This rāg is played again for the sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and sheep, so that a summary of music and ritual activity is as follows:

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Table 7 : Music and Ritual for Bhaumāṣṭamī Vratam

Approx. time	Location of musicians	Pañcai bājā	Kālikā bānā	Pūjā
10.45	Sitalpāṭī	Chasore maṅgal	--	Kālikā pūjā commences
11.30	"	" "	--	Tīkā given to Kālikā
11.55	"	" "	9 murrā/rāsa	Pūjā pāth for Kālikā
12.10	"	" "	" " "	Nitya pūjā
12.50	In front of paṭanginī	Malaśrī	--	Invitation to dasaĩ
1.05	Sitalpāṭī	Malaśrī	9 murrā/rāsa	Sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and white sheep

On the following bhaumāṣṭamī the usual ritual pattern is observed, but all the rites are accompanied by malaśrī instead of chasore maṅgal.

At Caite dasaĩ (March/April), the services of the musicians are required all day. The morning rituals and music correspond with those of aṣṭamī, except that the day begins with the renewal of Kālikā's banners (patākā), which hang from bamboo flagpoles outside the Kālikā Darbār. The raising of the new banners is heralded by the pañcai bājā playing chasore maṅgal. The sacrificial rāg navagā is played for the afternoon rites of Caite dasaĩ, not only for the propitiation of each of twenty-seven buffaloes to be sacrificed, but also as an auspicious welcome to the biggest of them (jetho raṅgo), and during the preparation of the sacrificial area and sharpening of the knives. Following the arrival of the buffaloes, both ensembles move from the Sitalpāṭī to the sacrificial courtyard, (paṭanginī), where they play the sacrificial music from the steps which connect the upper and lower squares (K2 on the Darbār Site Plan). Once the sacrifice of the Darbār buffaloes has begun, the music is virtually continuous, with the pañcai bājā playing navagā during the propitiation of each buffalo, when it is annointed with water, flowers, rice (achetā) and raksi, and the Kālikā nagārā bānā providing five murrā and rāsa for each sacrifice, apart from those of the biggest and smallest buffaloes, which each get nine murrā. The demise of each buffalo also marked by two rifle shots. As soon as one buffalo has been dispatched, navagā is commenced for the propitiation of the next. The music and ritual of Caite dasaĩ may be summarized as follows:

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Table 8 : Music and Ritual for Caite Dasaĩ

Approx. time	Location of musicians	Pañcai bājā	Kālikā bānā	Pūjā
9.00	Sitalpāṭī	Chasore maṅgal	--	Hanging Kālikā's banners
11.30	"	" "	--	Ṭīkā given to Kālikā
12.45	"	" "	9 murrā/rāsa	Pūjā pāṭh for Kālikā
1.00	"	" "	" " "	Nitya pūjā
2.00	"	Navagā	--	Arrival of biggest buffalo
2.30	In front of paṭanginī	"	--	Preparation of knives & sacrificial area
3.00	"	"	9 murrā/rāsa	Sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and white sheep
3.05	"	"	--	Propitiation of biggest buffalo
	"	--	9 murrā/rāsa	Sacrifice of biggest buffalo
3.10	"	Navagā	--	Propitiation and sacrifice for each of 25 buffaloes
		--	5 murrā/rāsa	
5.00	"	Navagā	--	Propitiation of smallest buffalo
	"	--	9 murrā/rāsa	Sacrifice of smallest buffalo

Ṭhūlo Dasaĩ

Ṭhūlo or baṛā dasaĩ is the biggest festival of the Nepalese Hindu calendar, lasting for the full fifteen days of the lunar cycle of the bright half of Āśvin (September/October). Dasaĩ is in honour of the Goddess of Female Energy in all her manifestations - as Durgā, Divine Mother of the Universe; Kāli, the Terrible Destructress; Taleju, Divine Protectress of Nepal; Bhairavī, the female aspect of Bhairav the Terrible; and as Mother Earth, or Mother Nature, the embodiment of female life-force, or śakti. Her lust for blood is satisfied by the sacrifice of hundreds of buffaloes, goats and sheep.

Dasaĩ commemorates the triumph of good over evil, as encapsulated in the Rāmāyaṇ's account of the victory of Rāmā over the demon King of Lanka, Rāvaṇa. Some Hindus believe that Rāmā was only successful once he had

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'evoked the Shakti or Supreme Energy vested in Goddess Durgā, the Divine Mother of the Universe' (Anderson 1977:142), whilst others believe that Sītā assumed the form of Kāli the Destructress, enabling her to slay Rāvaṇa. One of the central rites of dasaĩ at Gorkha Darbār, the sacrifice of an enormous buffalo (sattār), commemorates Durgā's slaying of the terrible demon Mahiṣāsura, as related in the Caṇḍī pāṭh of the Markaṇḍeya Purāna. However, any sacrifice to Kālikā, whether animal, pumpkin, or egg, reinacts this event. Mahiṣāsura had become so powerful that he had succeeded in evicting the gods from heaven and in establishing himself there instead. The homeless gods were advised by Viṣṇu and Śiva to concentrate their powers. When they did so, their energy took the form of jets of fire, from which Durgā emerged, riding on a lion. Having been armed by the gods, she entered into battle with the demon, but as the latter continually changed his shape, she was unable to defeat him. Finally, when he became a buffalo, Durgā was able to behead him, and so restore heaven to the gods.

The first nine days of dasaĩ are known as the nava rātri (nine nights), and the calendar for the festival, as celebrated at Gorkha Darbār, is as shown in Table 9 overleaf.

Sometimes the lunar cycle and ritual calendar (tithi) do not correspond, and an adjustment has to be made. This happened in Āśvin B.S.2044 (Sept-Oct 1987), when the sixth day (saṣṭhi) of Navarātri was missing from the lunar cycle. In order to observe the requisite number of pūjās for Kālikā, on the fifth day (pañcamī) all the rituals were performed twice.

A variety of musics features at the Darbār throughout the celebration of dasaĩ. In addition to the nagārā bānā and the succession of rāgas played by the pañcai bājā, single and paired (jor) damāhā are played, the susāre have their own ensemble, three professional female singers from Hanuman Ḍhoka (the old royal palace in Kathmandu) sing malaśrī to accompany the daily rites, and local gāine sing their own versions of malaśrī, accompanying themselves on sāraṅgi.

Jor Damāhā

For the first seven days of navarātri (from ghaṭasthāpanā to phūlpātī), a

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Table 9 : Ṭhūlo Dasaĩ at Gorkha Darbār: Calendar

Day		Major Events
1	Ghaṭasthāpanā	Kālikā moved from Rāja Darbār to newly-established dasaĩ ghar (pūjā room) in Kālikā Darbār.
		Barley (jamara) planted.
2		
3		
4		Daily pūjās, as for aṣṭamī
5		
6		Belko boṭ: spirit of Kālikā invited into a branch of the bel tree in a ceremony held south of Gorkha Bajār
7	Phūlpātī	Establishment of the phūlpātī (the bel tree twig embodying the spirit of Kālikā and sacred leaves and flowers) and royal water vessel (kalaś) in the Kālikā Darbār.
		Night pūjā: Bhadrakāli
8	Mahāṣṭamī	'Great 8th' - sacrifice of buffaloes, goats, etc.
		Night pūjā: Kāl rātri (black night).
9	Mahānavamī	'Great 9th' - pūjās on behalf of tools, vehicles and musical instruments.
		Sacrifice of buffaloes, goats, etc.
		Sacrifice of the sattār at sunset.
		Night pūjā: Reauti
10	Vijayā Daśamī	'Glorious 10th' - Phāgu khelne: throwing dye and red powder (abir).
		Distribution of ṭīkā and barley sprouts to one's juniors.
		Kālikā moved to ground floor of Rāja Darbār.
		Disposal of the phūlpātī.
11		
12		
13		
14	Caturdaśī	Sacrifice of buffaloes, goats, etc.
15	Púrṇimā	Kālikā moves back to attic room of Rāja Darbār at sunrise.
		Darbār personnel feasted.

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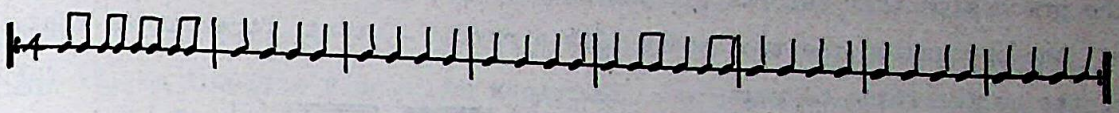
pair of damāhā is played five times daily at approximately 2pm, 6pm, 9pm, 12am and 4am. These playings do not accompany any ritual activities. The two damāhā are played as nagārā, with two sticks, by two musicians who beat out the following rhythm:



The first playing takes place after the conclusion of the daily rituals and sacrifices. The two damāhā are played from the small courtyard in front of the Sitalpāṭī (marked J on the Darbār Site Plan), to enable the people of the town to hear them. many of the musicians believe that the function of the jor damāhā is to announce to the Gorkha populace that all is well at the Darbār, but opinion is divided, some thinking that it is played for Kālikā's pleasure, and others connecting it with the story of her killing of the demon Mahiṣāsura. The evening playing succeeds the ārati pūjā (which is accompanied by nagārā bānā and pañcai bājā), the jor damāhā playing from the same location as the ensembles, on the stone staircase outside the Darbār walls (K2 on the Site Plan). The three night-time playings take place from the sitalpāṭī.

This tradition recalls that of the 'three- and five-fold naûba' of the Abbasids, believed to have dated from the early tenth century (Farmer 1929:153). Essentially, the nauba was the periodic playing of a military band (ṭabl khāna) to announce the five hours of prayer, the ensemble including shawm, two sizes of kettledrum, double-headed drum, cymbals, and straight natural trumpet, a band that sounds remarkably like pañcai bājā. Originally, the nauba was the prerogative of the khalif, in deference to his exalted status. Gradually, however, the conferment of a nauba became a much-sought honour, and various types of kettledrum seem to have been employed as substitutes for the full military band:

> In the year 966, Al-Muti' had granted leave to a general to have kettledrums played at prayer-times during a campaign, a privilege which appears to have been retained on his return...
>
> In 979... Al-Ta'i' conferred on 'Adud al-Daula the much-sought privilege... This however, was the three-fold nauba and not the five-fold one which was still the prerogative of the khalif. Yet in 1000, under Al-Qadir, a minister was allowed to beat a tabl (drum) for the five-fold honour...
>
> Khalif Al-Muqtadi (1075-94), in appointing a governor to a province, conferred on him the great kettledrums called kusat (sing. kus), and was permitted to sound the five-fold nauba within the limits of his province, but in the camp of the sultan he

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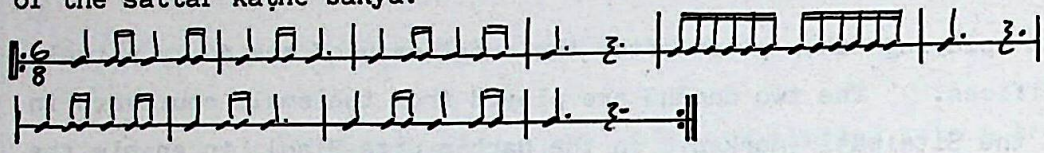
was to confine himself to the three-fold nauba.

(Farmer 1929:207)

On phūlpātī, the jor damāhā precedes the pañcai bājā and nagārā bānā in the procession that escorts the phūlpātī to the Darbār. For the duration of the procession the two damāhā play a rhythm that foreshadows that of the sattar kāṭne bākya:



From the establishment of the phūlpātī, the jor damāhā amalgamates with the pañcai bājā, and does not play independently again. Apart from Caite dasaĩ, when the jor damāhā augments the pañcai bājā, this pair is not played at any other time of the year.

The employment of additional damāhā(s) during dasaĩ is not a tradition that is unique to Gorkha Darbār. At Manakāmanā, the ritual ensemble is reinforced by an extra damāhā, and at Nuwakoṭ a jor damāhā plays several times daily during navarātri at sacred locations (including Taleju and Bhairavī temples, the Satali Darbār and the dhāmi's house).

Damāhā at Upallokoṭ and Tallokoṭ

Throughout navarātri there are daily pūjās at Upallokoṭ and Tallokoṭ, the sites of Magar and Ghale fortresses captured by Drabya Śāha, on the hills rising to the east and west of the Darbār. The rites are accompanied by single damāhās played with two sticks, their rhythm being the same as that of the jor damāhā. On mahāṣṭamī and mahānavamī there are blood sacrifices, also accompanied by damāhā.

Susāre band

For the duration of dasaĩ, the Magar susāres of the Darbār have their own band, consisting of a large and a small mṛdaṅga - barrel drums, without tuning-paste or pegs, with unequal heads pitched a major third apart, and played with the hands only - and two pairs of large bowler-hat shaped cymbals called jhyāli, but corresponding more closely with the Newāri bhusiāḥ.

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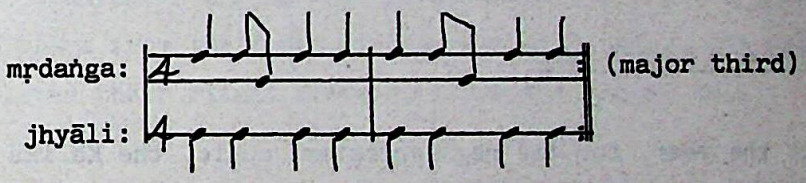
The function of the susāre band is to lead priestly processions from the secluded interior of the Darbār, from whence their music emanates prior to their appearance in the visible ritual area immediately surrounding the Darbār buildings. Thus, Bhadrakāli begins with the susāre band leading a procession of priests with their offerings to the sacrificial post (maulo) in the paṭanginī for the blessing of the ritual knives (khaṛgamāī pūjā) (S1 on the Site Plan). On Mahāṣṭamī, the procession of susāres and brāhmins goes to the entrance opposite the sitalpāṭī (S2) for the ritual annointing of the biggest and smallest buffaloes. For the reaūti pūjā on the night of mahānavamī, the susāre band leads the brāhmins carrying the trays of offerings, to the courtyard in front of the Rāja Darbār (S3) and continues to play throughout the pūjā. On daśamī, the susāres lead the priests out of the Kālikā Darbār, and having made a ritual circuit of the court (paṭanginī), they continue to play from the cloistered area before the door of the Kālikā Darbār (S4), while the priests and non-music-playing susāres circumambulate the paṭanginī three times, having red dye and powder thrown over them. Finally, on purṇimā, prior to Kālikā's return to her attic room, the susāre band plays for approximately ten minutes, moving in a circuit around the ground floor of the Rāja Darbār.

On each occasion, the susāres play a single rhythmic pattern which is referred to as phāgu, presumably because it accompanies the phāgu khelne of vijayā daśamī:



Maṅgalinī and Kulcinī

Each dasaī, a priest from the royal palace in Kathmandu officiates at Gorkha Darbār, bringing with him three women from the Basantpur Darbār (old palace) of Kathmandu. One of these - the kulcinī - is attendant upon the sacred kalaś during the processions on phūlpātī and daśamī. The other two women - the maṅgalinī - are professional singers, who provide auspicious songs at many of the official occasions of the royal family (e.g. the king's birthday). For dasaī, the women are rotated year-by-year between Gorkha, Nuwakoṭ and Kathmandu. The maṅgalinī sing malaśrī for all the major rites and sacrifices of dasaī, mostly from the first

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floor window of the Rāja Darbār, overlooking the paṭanginī (M1). They also sing outside Gorakhnāth's cave (M2) during the sacred readings each morning. On phūlpātī, having participated in the procession which brings the phūlpātī to the Darbār, the maṅgalinī sing from the cloistered area of the raṅga mahal (M3) during the rites which precede its establishment in the dasaĩ ghar. During reaũti pūjā, when the king's horse is propitiated, the women, carrying trays of oil-wick lights and singing malaśrī, circumambulate the consecrated area in front of the Rāja Darbār three times, before taking up a position in the main doorway (M4). Their other duties include drenching the priests and susāres with red dye and powder thrown from the upper windows of the raṅga mahal during the phāgu khelne of daśamī, and on purnimā, preparing and serving a feast to all the employees of the Darbār.

Gāine

During dasaĩ local gāine - itinerant minstrels - sing their own versions of malaśrī at the Darbār, accompanying themselves on their four-string bowed fiddle, sāraṅgi, ostensibly for the pleasure of Kālikā, but also in order to beg a few rupees from devotees. On phūlpātī, two gāine take part in the phūlpātī procession, preceding all the other musicians.

Pañcai Bājā and Nagārā Bānā

Throughout the year, for the regular aṣṭamī music, the Kālikā nagārā bānā and the pañcai bājā play from the sitalpāṭī (K1 on the Site Plan), which is adjacent to the Kālikā Darbār. On these days, all the pūjās and sacrifices which the music accompanies take place within the Kālikā Darbār. Because the Tantric rituals may not be observed, the musical requirements are clearly specified, and instructions to the musicians of when to play, are shouted from a window by one of the officiating priests The nagarci sits at the front of the sitalpāṭī facing this window, in order to receive the orders to play, his first beat indicating to the other musicians, seated informally at the back of the pāṭī. The members of the two ensembles are intermingled, so that at first, it is difficult to see who belongs to which group.

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During Caite and thūlo dasaĩ, the sacrifice of buffaloes and the mass cutting of goats take place in the courtyard between the Kālikā and Rāja Darbārs (paṭanginī), buffaloes being cut at the central sacrificial post (maulo), and goats towards the back of this court. For these sacrifices, the musicians play from the steps joining the courtyards between Kālikā and Rāja Darbārs (K2), in order to be in close proximity to the ritual activity. In this case, the signal to play for the nagārā bānā is the firing of a shotgun, which accompanies the death of each buffalo and batch of goats.

During the first six days of ṭhūlo dasaĩ, the ensembles play from a third location, outside the main Darbār walls, on the turn of the stone staircase, adjacent to the Gorakhpāṭī (K3). Each evening at sunset, from ghaṭasthāpanā to phūlpātī, the pañcai bājā plays malaśrī and the nagārā bānā, five murrā from this location, to accompany the ārati pūjā inside the Kālikā Darbār. When the phūlpātī is established at the Darbār, prior to its entry into the Kālikā Darbār, there is a pūjā in the paṭanginī, for which the pañcai bājā play malaśrī for the last time, accompanied by nine murrā from the nagārā bānā. This is followed by the sacrifice of a goat, which initiates the sacrificial stage of dasaĩ, marked musically by the supplanting of the rāg malaśrī by navagā. The first two playings of navagā, coinciding with sunset, are form this location outside the Darbār, after which the ensembles resume their place in the sitalpāṭī.
On just one occasion - during the phāgu khelne of vijaya daśamī - the pañcai bājā plays from the front of the paṭanginī (K4). The susāre band, having completed their ritual circuit, flank the pañcai bājā.

Each of these separate groups of musicians has its own function within the ritual structure of dasaĩ, and, as can be seen clearly from the Darbār Site Plan, each performs from its own clearly defined locations, which do not overlap with those of the other groups.

The ritual order of ṭhūlo dasaĩ is complemented by a sequence of highly individual rāgs, each with a distinctive rhythmic pattern. The rāg of the season is malaśrī (Musical Example 40), which is hexatonic in ascent with third and seventh degrees sharpened (B and F#), and heptatonic in descent, with third and seventh flattened (Bb and F). It has a 7-beat

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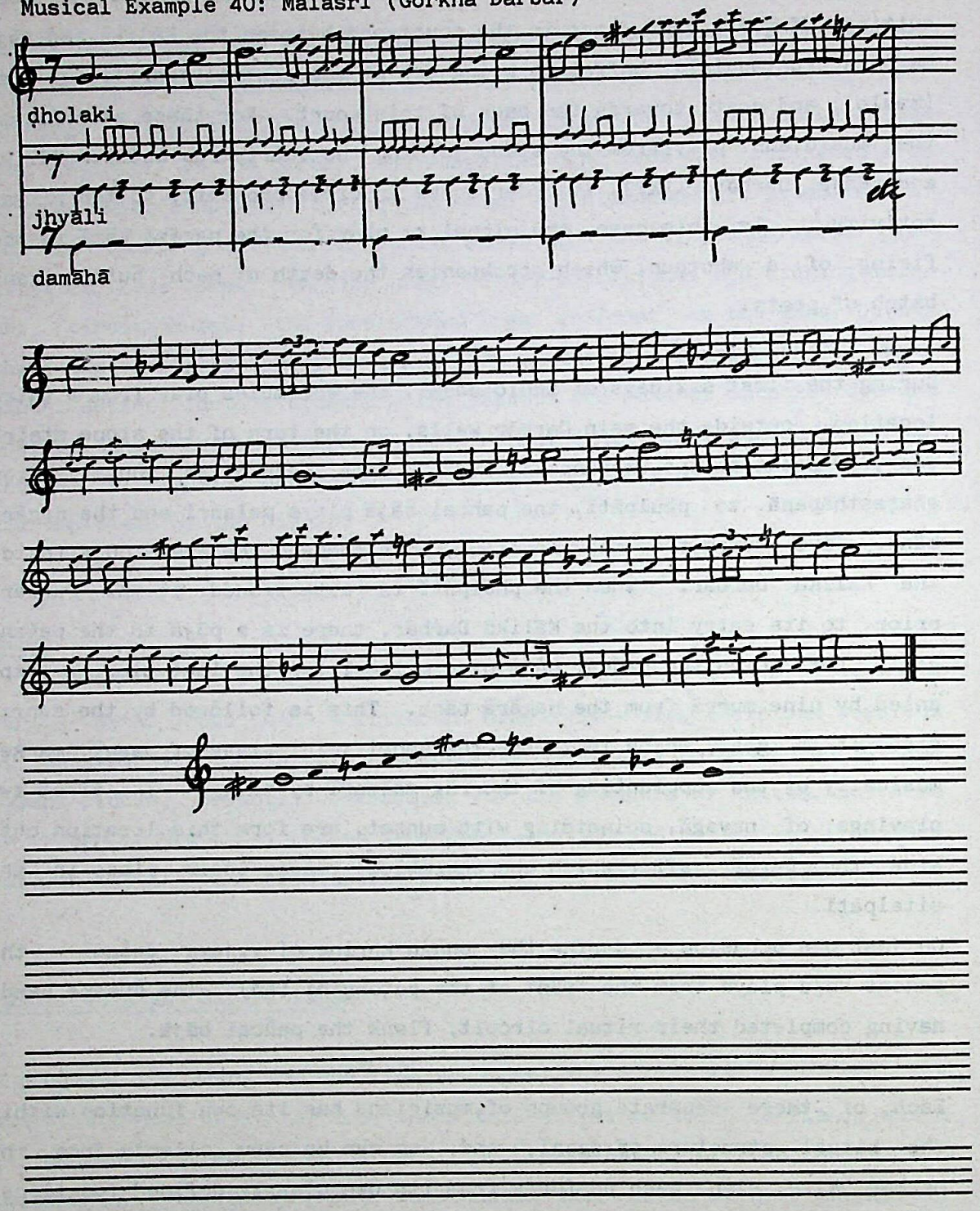
Musical Example 40: Malaśrī (Gorkha Darbār)



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tāl, comprised 3 + 4 beats. Malaśrī is the rāg which inaugurates dasaĩ, being played from bhaumāṣṭamī to phūlpātī for all the preparatory dasaĩ rituals. These include the invitation to dasaĩ on Bhaumāṣṭamī, Kālikā's move from the Rāja Darbār to the dasaĩ ghar and the planting of barley seeds on ghaṭasthāpanā, the arrival of the sattar at the Darbār, the procession bringing the phūlpātī to the Darbār and its establishment in the dasaĩ ghar on phūlpātī. The music and rituals of ghaṭasthāpanā and phūlpātī are summarized in Tables 10 and 11.

At sunset on phūlpātī, the second stage of dasaĩ is heralded by a change of rāg from malaśrī to navagā, the sacrificial rāg (Musical Example. 41). The melodic material of navagā corresponds with that of the Western aeolian mode, with the addition of a sharpened leading-note at the bottom end of the scale only. The driving rhythm is based on a 16-beat cycle, comprised 2 + 2 + 3 + 3 + 4 beats. As soon as the phūlpātī has been established, the second stage of dasaĩ is initiated with the propitiation and sacrifice of a goat, accompanied by navagā. From this point until mid-day on vijayā daśamī, and all day on caturdāśī, navagā accompanies all the sacrificial rites (apart from the sacrifice of the sattar), including the ceremony for the sacrificial knives (khaṛgamāī pūjā) during Bhadrakāli, the propitiation of hundreds of buffaloes and goats throughout mahāṣṭamī and mahānavamī, the sacrifice of the large black goat during Kāl-rātri, and the white sheep during reaũte pūjā, and the skinning of the sattar on the morning of daśamī. Navagā is also played for the raising of new banners (patākā) for Kālikā, and the hanging of a canopy (canduwā) above the sacrificial courtyard on the morning of mahaaṣṭamī and it accompanies a secret rite - śaṅkha dhuni - which takes place four times during the dasaĩ period, first, as one of the Bhadrakāli rites, and then at about mid-day on each of the days of blood sacrifice - mahāṣṭamī, mahānavamī and caturdaśī. Śaṅkha dhuni requires the pañcai bājā to play navagā and the nagārā bānā to sound three murrā and rāsa a total of twenty-seven times. The music and events of these three days are summarized in Tables 12, 13 and 15.

At sunset on mahānavamī, navagā is interrupted by the special rāg that accompanies the propitiation and sacrifice of the enormous buffalo, the sattār kāṭne bākya (biggest buffalo-cutting melody). The musical material parallels that of the Western aeolian mode, with the exceptional feature that the upper tonic (Bb) is flattened by a semitone. The 6-beat rhythmic

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TABLE 10: ṬHŪLO DASAĪ: MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR GHAṬASTHĀPANĀ

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
5am	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: malasrī Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Kālikā moves from Rāja Darbār to dasaī ghar, Kālikā Darbār
5.15	"	Jor damāhā	—
7.00	"	Pañcai bājā: malasrī Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Barley seed sown inside Kālikā Darbār
10.55	"	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī	Commencement of Kālikā pūjā
10.20	"	" " "	Ṭīkā given to Kālikā
11.25	"	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Pūjā pāth for Kālikā
12.10	"	" " "	Nitya pūjā
1.30	"	" " "	Sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and sheep
1.45	"	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī	Closing pūjā
1.50	Outside Sitalpāṭī	Jor damāhā	—
6.10	Outside Darbār	Pañcai bājā: Malasrī Nagārā bānā: 5 murrā	Ārati pūjā
6.13	"	Jor damāhā	—
9pm	Outside Sitalpāṭī	" "	—
12am	"	" "	—
4am	"	" "	—

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TABLE 11 : THŪLO DASAĪ: MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR PHŪLPĀTĪ AND BHADRAKĀLI

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
8.30am	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī	Satār annointed at Darbār door
10.45	"	" " "	Kālikā pūjā commences
11.30	"	" " "	Ṭīkā given to Kālikā
11.55	"	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Pūjā pāth for Kālikā
12.10	"	" " "	Nitya pūjā
1pm	"	" " "	Sacrifice of pumpkin, goat and sheep
4.10	"	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī	Assembly of procession of 9 nisān
4.13	"	" " "	Departure of procession of nisān
4.20	Darbār to Sati Pipal and back	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī Nagārā bānā Jor damāhā (Gāine: malaśrī) (Maṅgalinī: malaśrī)	Phūlpātī procession with priests and all Darbār officials, sacred kalaś and Maṅgalinī and Kulcinī
5.30	Outside Darbār	Pañcai bājā: malaśrī Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Arrival of phūlpātī at paṭanginī
5.45	"	" " "	Establishment of phūlpātī inside Kālikā Darbār
6.00	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Propitiation of goat
6.10	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of goat
		BHADRAKĀLI	
7.15	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Pūjā for the sacrificial knives (Khaṛgamāī) in the paṭanginī
7.20	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 5 murrā	" " "
8.00	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 27 x 3 murrā	Saṅkha dhuni
8.30	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Propitiation and sacrifice of goat

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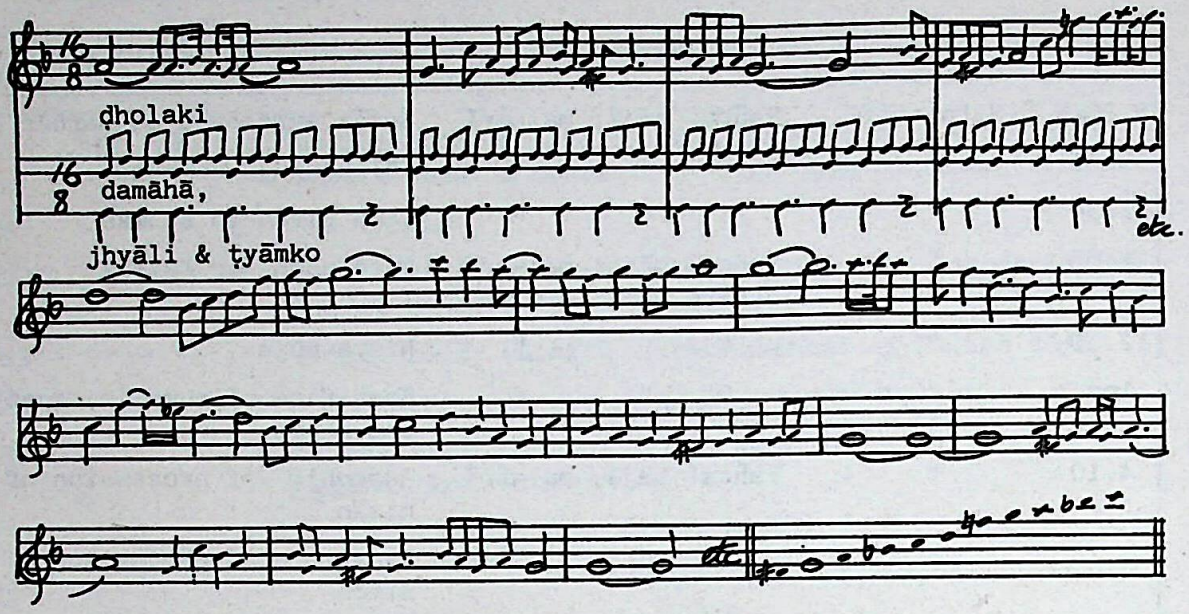
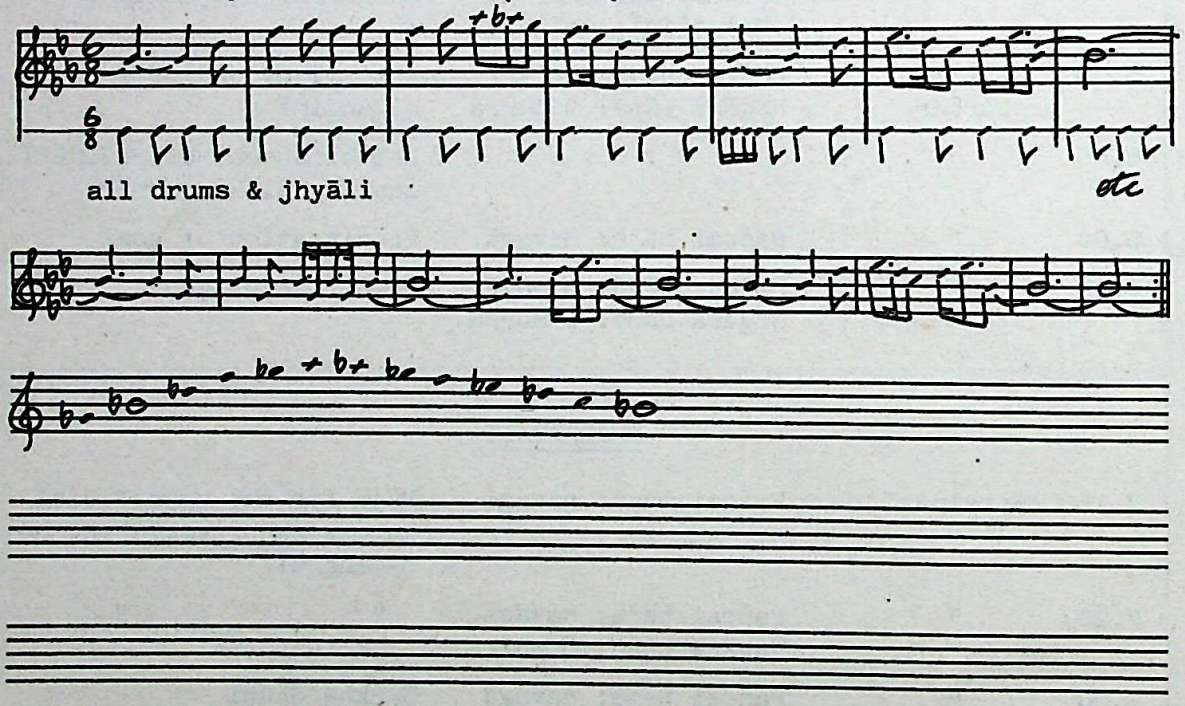
Musical Example 41: Navagā (Gorkha Darbār)



Musical Example 42: Sattār kāṭne bākya (Gorkha Darbār)



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cycle corresponds with Western 6/8 time, being comprised 3 + 3 beats. All the non-melodic instruments of the pañcai bājā sound this rhythm. The sattar kāṭne bākya is played again shortly after the sacrifice of the sattar for the dispatch of the last and smallest (kancho) buffalo, after which it is not played again until the mahānavamī of the following year.

Two other rāgs are introduced on vijayā daśamī. The first of these - phāgu - (Musical Example 43) is the seasonal rāg for the month of Phālgun (February-March), and is associated particularly with the celebration of the Holi festival, during which coloured powder and dye are thrown (phāgu khelne). On vijayā daśamī, phāgu accompanies the phāgu khelne of the brāhmins, susāre and maṅgalinī at the Darbār, and continues to be played throughout the afternoon, for Kālikā's return journey from the dasaĩ ghar to the ground floor of the Rāja Darbār, and for the procession to Manepāni or Chipitol[1] to dispose of the phūlpātī (described in Chapter III). Phāgu is hexatonic, and the fifth degree is flattened in descent. The tonic note is approached only from the minor third above or the major third below. The meter parallels Western 6/8 time, being 3 + 3 beats.

Once the phūlpātī has been ritually jettisoned, the introduction of the rāg cā̃cari marks a sudden relaxation in tension. The 14-beat tāl of cā̃cari is comprised 4 + 3 + 3 + 4 beats, and the melodic material corresponds with the Western aeolian mode (Musical Example 44). This rāg is played during the return journey to the Darbār, interspersed with popular khyāli and jhyāure, and again upon arrival, and is played in no other connection. The music and ritual activity of vijayā daśamī are summarized in Table 14.

On the final day of dasaĩ, purnimā, the rāg chasore maṅgal is reinstated during the third and final stage of Kālikā's ritual circumambulation of the Darbār, when she moves from the ground floor to her attic room in the Rāja Darbār.

1. The direction taken by this procession varies from year to year, depending on the position of Venus. If Venus lies to the west, the phūlpātī procession goes north-eastwards to Manepāni. If Venus lies to the east, however, the procession goes south-westwards to Chipitol.

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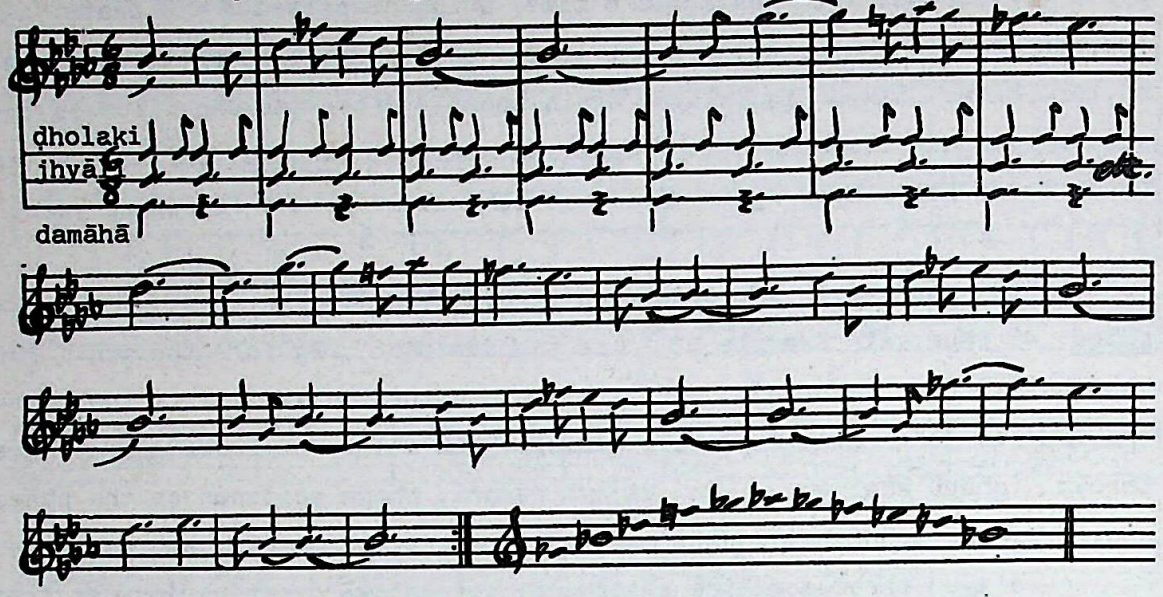
Musical Example 43: Phāgu (Gorkha Darbār)



Musical Example 44: Cāčari (Gorkha Darbār)

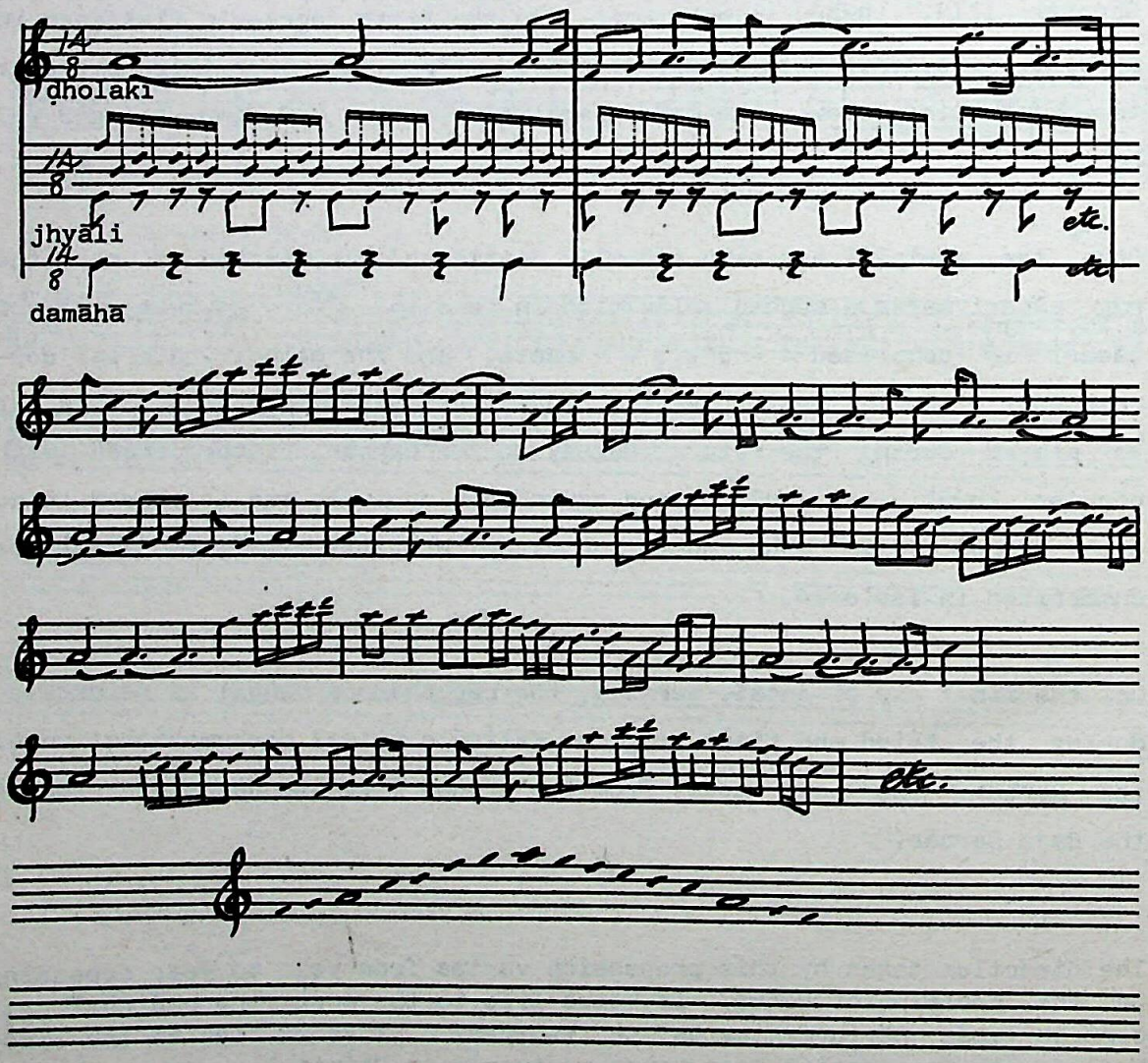


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TABLE 12: ṬHŪLO DASAĬ: MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR MAHĀṢṬAMĪ AND KĀLRĀTRI

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
10.45 (am)	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Raising the new banners (patākā)
11.45	"	" " "	Pūjā pāth for Kālikā
11.50	"	" " "	Nitya pūjā
12.00	"	" " "	Canopy (canduwā) hung above paṭanginī
12.20	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 27 x 3 murrā	Śaṅkha dhuni
1.50	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Buffaloes annointed at door of Darbār near Sitalpāṭī
2.15	Paṭanginī	" " "	Preparation of sacrificial area with cowdung and rekhi. Lampstand (pānas) brought out
2.30	"	" " "	Propitiation of biggest (jetho) buffalo
	"	Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of biggest buffalo
2.40 - c.7pm	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā alternately with Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā 33 times	Propitiation and sacrifice of 33 buffaloes
c.7pm	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Propitiation of smallest (kancho) buffalo
		Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of smallest buffalo
		KĀLRĀTRI	
11.45pm	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Propitiation and sacrifice of pumpkin
12.00am	"	" " "	Propitiation and sacrifice of large black goat

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TABLE 13 : ṬHŪLO DASAĪ: MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR MAHĀNAVAMĪ AND REAŨTE PŪJĀ

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
11.30am	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Kālikā pūjā commences
12.00	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 27 x 3 murrā	Śaṅkha dhuni
1.00	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Buffaloes annointed at door
2.15	Paṭanginī	" " "	Preparation of ritual area Lampstand (pānas) placed
2.30 - 5pm	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā alternately with Nagārā bānā: 5 murrā 16 times	Propitiation and sacrifice of 16 buffaloes
5.20	"	Pañcai bājā: sattār kāṭne bākya	Propitiation of enormous buffalo (sattār)
5.40 (sunset)	"	Pañcai bājā: sattār kāṭne bākya Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of sattār
6.55	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā alternately with Nagārā bānā: 5 murrā 3 times	Propitiation and sacrifice of 3 buffaloes
7.20	"	Pañcai bājā: sattār kāṭne bākya Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Propitiation and sacrifice of smallest (kancho) buffalo
7.55	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Mass propitiation of 51 goats
	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Start of sacrifice of 51 goats
8.10	"	" " "	Sacrifice of last 9 of 51 goats
		REAŨTE PŪJĀ	
9.00pm	In front of Rāja Darbār	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Propitiation of King's white horse
9.10	" " "	" " "	Propitiation of white sheep
9.20	" "	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of white sheep

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TABLE 14 : ṬHŪLO DASAĪ: MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR VIJAYĀ DAŚAMĪ

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
9.10am	Sitalpāṭī	Pancai bājā: navagā	Knives brought out for skinning the sattar
9.40	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sattar skinned
12.00	"	" " "	Ṭīkā and barley sprouts given to Kālikā
1.10	Paṭanginī	Pañcai bājā: phāgu (susāre band: phāgu)	Priests, susare and maṅgalinī throw dye and red powder (phāgu khelne)
1.30	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: phāgu Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Propitiation and sacrifice of goat during pūjā for Kālikā's banners (alum)
1.50	"	Pañcai bājā: phāgu	Pūjā for Kālikā prior to moving to Rāja Darbār
3.30	"	Pañcai bājā: phāgu Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Return of Kālikā to Rāja Darbār (ground floor room)
4.30	Darbār to Manepāni or Chipitol	Pancai bājā: phāgu Nagārā bānā	Procession taking phūlpātī for ritual disposal
5.15	Manepāni Dhāra or Chipitol	Pañcai bājā: phāgu Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Disposal of phūlpātī
5.20 - c.7pm	Manepāni or Chipitol to Darbār	Pañcai bājā: cā̃cari & khyāli, jhyāure	Return journey to Darbār
c.7pm	Paṭanginī	Pañcai bājā: cā̃cari	Arrival at Darbār

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TABLE 15 : MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR CATURDAŚĪ

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
11.55am	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Kālikā pūjā commences
12.10	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 27 x 3 murrā	Śaṅkha dhuni
12.50	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Buffaloes annointed at door
1.00	Paṭanginī	" " "	Lampstand (pānas) brought out; knives propitiated; Biggest buffalo (jetho) propitiated
1.15 - 2.30	" "	Pañcai bājā: navagā alternately with Nagārā bānā: 5 murrā 16 times	Propitiation and sacrifice of 16 buffaloes
3.55 - 4.50	"	" " " 9 times	Propitiation and sacrifice of 9 buffaloes
4.50	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Propitiation of smallest (kancho) buffalo
		Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Sacrifice of smallest buffalo
4.58	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā	Mass propitiation of 36 goats
5.02	"	Pañcai bājā: navagā Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Start of sacrifice of 36 goats
5.10	"	" " "	Sacrifice of last 9 of 36 goats

TABLE 16 : MUSIC AND RITUAL FOR PURṆIMĀ

Time	Place	Music	Ritual Activity
5.15am (sunrise)	Sitalpāṭī	Pañcai bājā: chasore maṅgal Nagārā bānā: 9 murrā	Kālikā returns to attic room of Rāja Darbār

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Thus, each rāg has a specific function within the ritual framework of dasaĩ, so that the various stages of the festival are mapped out by the sequence of rāgs, from the preparatory rites (malaśrī) and the sacrifices (navagā and sattār kāṭne bākya), to the concluding ceremonies (phāgu, cā̃cari) before the re-establishment of the status quo (chasore maṅgal).

Apart from playing for the various forms of Kālikā pūjā, the Gorkha Darbār pañcai bājā also plays in the service of other deities - Mahādev, Gaṇeś, Kṛṣṇa, Gaṅga and Caṇḍī - on specific occasions, as summarized in Table 17.

Oral history relates that originally the pañcai bājā was attached to the Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple at Rani Pokhari, and only subsequently was transferred to the Darbār. Today, the band plays at this temple on four occasions of the year. The first of these falls during the hot and dry season prior to the rains on the fifth day of the bright half of Baiśakh (May/June), when the priests of the Darbār propitiate Mahādev on behalf of the community, to send rain. The origin of this ritual - jaldhāra - is uncertain, but it is thought to date from the time of Rām Śāha. The pañcai bājā is stationed by the sacred pond, Rani Pokhari, whilst fifteen brāhmins perform the jaldhāra rites inside the Mahādev temple. Asāre is played four times, to mark the beginning of the pūjā, the offering of water to Mahādev, and the start and finish of a reading of the Rudri pāth relating stories of Śiva. A fifth playing of asāre accompanies the musicians' circumambulation of the temple, when the susāre throws water over them. They make a ritual circuit of Rani Pokhari, the Chipitol Mahādev temple and the Gaṇeś temple, before proceeding through Gorkha Bajār and taking the main path up to the Darbār. They play asāre continuously, and as they progress, the public throw water over them. On arrival at the Kālikā Darbār, asāre is played again whilst the musicians are soaked with water.

Asāre (Musical Example 45) is pentatonic in ascent and hexatonic in descent, the additional note being the fifth above the tonic. It has a 6-beat rhythmic cycle, which correlates with Western 6/8 time. Jhyāli and damāhā sound each downbeat, whilst ḍholaki plays a distinctive rhythm which the musicians claim to be imitative of the body movements during rice-transplanting. (See also Musical Example 26 , asare played by Tin Mane pañcai bājā).

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TABLE 17: CALENDAR OF RITUAL DUTIES OF GORKHA DARBĀR PAÑCAI BĀJĀ

Date	Occasion	Deity	Place	Rāg
Throughout the year	Aṣṭamī	Kālikā	Kālikā Darbār	Chasore maṅgal
Baiśakh purṇimā (mid-May)	Caṇḍī purṇimā	Caṇḍī	Caṇḍī shrine, Gorkha Darbār	Asāre
Baiśakh śukla pañcamī (May)	Jaldhāra	Mahādev	Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple	Asāre
Baiśakh śukla daśamī (May)	Lākhpāti	Gaṅga	Darauṇḍi River	Asāre
1 Śrāvaṇ (mid-July)	Śrāvaṇ saṃkrānti	Kaṇḍara (a demon)	Rāja Darbār	Chasore maṅgal
Bhadra (Aug/Sep)	Tīj	Mahādev	Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple	Chasore maṅgal
Bhadra/Āśvin (Sep/Oct)	Bhaumāṣṭamī vratam	Kālikā	Kālikā Darbār	Malaśrī
Āśvin (Oct)	Ṭhūlo Dasaĩ: Ghaṭasthāpanā to Phūlpātī	Kālikā	Kālikā Darbār	Malaśrī
	Phūlpātī to Vijayā Daśamī			Navagā
	Mahānavamī			Sattar kāṭne bākya
	Vijayā Daśamī			Phāgu Cā̃cari
	Caturdaśī			Navagā
	Purṇimā			Chasore maṅgal
Āśvin purṇimā to Kartik purṇimā (Oct-Nov)	Tihār (ārati pūjā)	Gaṇeś Kṛṣṇa Mahādev	Gaṇeś temple Muralighar Nārāyaṇa temple Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple	Chasore maṅgal
Phālgun (Feb)	Śivarātri	Mahādev	Ramesvar Mahadev temple	Chasore maṅgal
Cait (April)	Caite Dasaĩ	Kālikā	Kālikā Darbār	Chasore maṅgal Navagā

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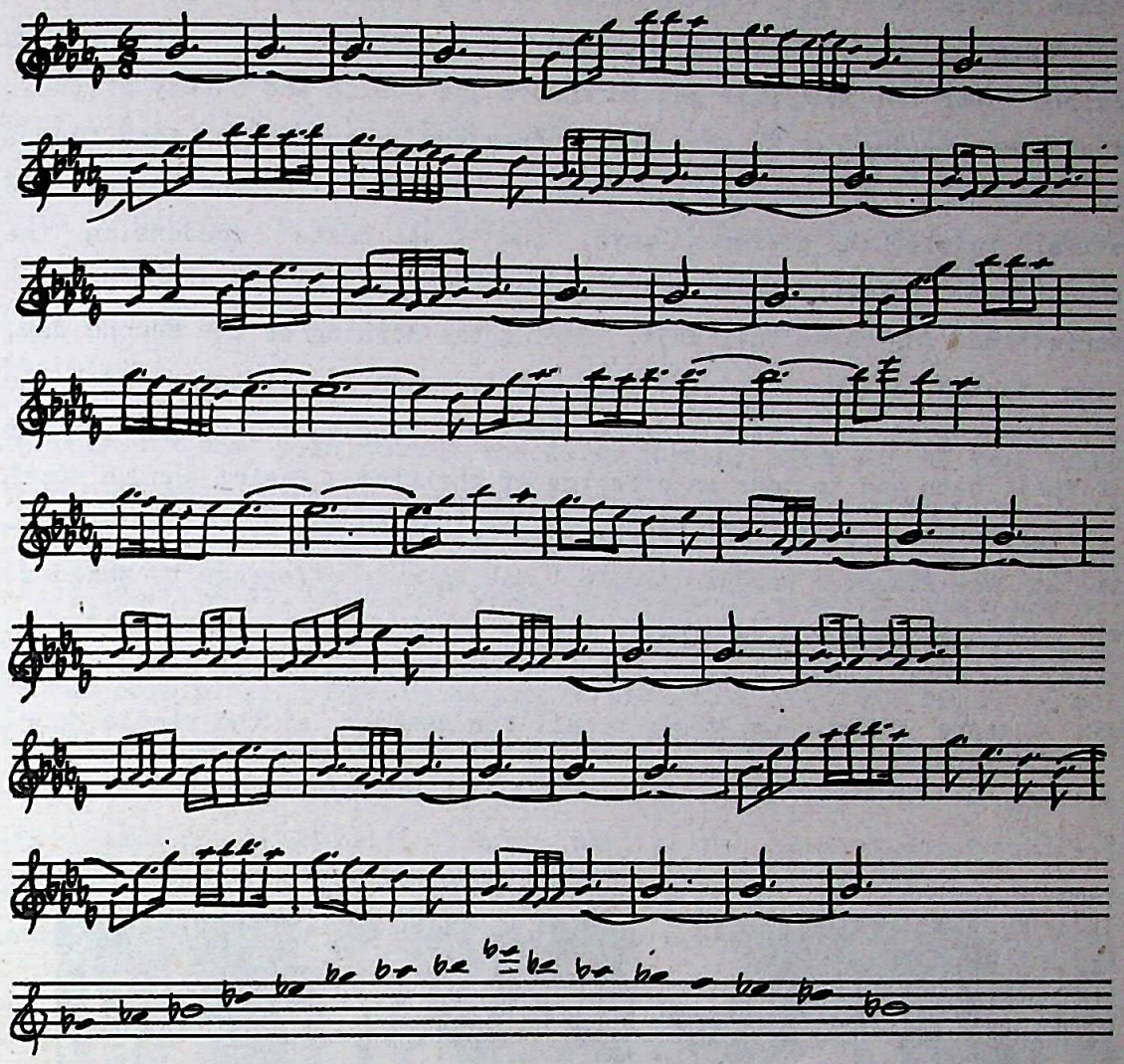
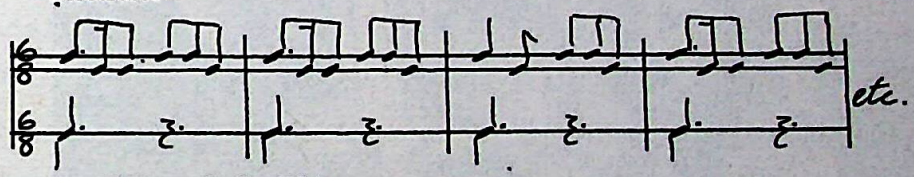
Musical Example 45: Asāre (Gorkha Darbār)



Ḍholaki



Damāhā and jhyāli

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The second occasion on which the pañcai bājā plays at the Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple is at tīj - the festival during which Nepali women propitiate Mahādev as the universal husband, to absolve them from all the sins incurred over the past year and to ensure the health and safety of their husbands during the coming year, or if they are unmarried, to send them a good husband. In Gorkha, the women of the various castes observe the festival in slightly different ways, the lower castes condensing the rituals into a twenty-four hour celebration, which for brāhmins and chetris last for three full days. During the morning of the second day, having fasted and kept an all-night vigil, women of all castes dress in their wedding saris or best clothes, and walk singing tīj songs, to take a ritual bath and to make an offering at the Bindya Basini shrine north of Gorkha Darbār. In the afternoon, they return to the Bajār and congregate at the Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple. Having made offerings to Mahādev, they remain singing and dancing in groups until well into the night. At sunset, in the midst of the throngs of women, the Darbār pañcai bājā plays chasore maṅgal on their behalf for Mahādev, at the temple door.

Plate 72: Brāhmin women celebrating Tīj (Gorkha)

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The festival in honour of Lord Śiva - Śivarātri - which falls on the fourteenth day (caturdaśī) of the waning moon in Phlagun (February/March) is a relatively small-scale celebration in Gorkha, many devotees of Śiva prefering to travel to Paśupatināth. Once again, the Darbār pañcai bājā is required to play at the Rāmeśvar Mahādev temple at sunset. On this occasion, a big bonfire is built in the precincts of the temple. There is a brief pūjā before a brāhmin lights the fire and the pañcai bājā plays chasore maṅgal. Devotees continue to fuel the fire well into the night.

Throughout the year there are daily morning pūjās at the Rani Pokhari temples (Gaṇeś, Muralighar Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa) and Rāmeśvar Mahādev temples) but no music accompanies these rites. During the two lunar cycles from Āśvin purnimā at the end of dasaĩ, until Kartik purṇimā, there are ārati pūjās at sunset each day at all three temples, for which the Darbār pañcai bājā plays. Chasore maṅgal is played outside each temple in turn, whilst a brāhmin lights oil-wicks inside, and proceeds to illuminate the outsides of the temples, by placing lighted oil-wicks all around them. This nightly illumination forms part of the celebration of tihār- the five-day festival of lights in honour of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Wealth and Good Fortune, which falls during this month.

Once a year, on Baiśakh (or Caṇḍī) purṇimā (April/May), the Darbār pañcai bājā plays in honour of the Goddess Caṇḍī, a fierce manifestation of Durgā. In the Gorkha area, there are two shrines to Caṇḍī, at the smaller one of which (Caṇḍinī, situated at the resting place (cautāra) of Sat Dhure), a chicken is sacrificed without the participation of pañcai bājā. At the principal shrine, (situated at the cautāra to the eastern side of Hanuman Banjyaṅg) a Magar from Gorkha Darbār officiates, offering a pair of chickens and a piglet, for which the Darbār pañcai bājā plays asāre from the cautāra, immediately in front of the shrine. Asāre is played three times; first, during the offering of rice (achetā), sweetmeats, flowers and raksi, and the consecration of the sacrificial area. The second playing of asāre accompanies the sacrifice of the cock and hen, and the third, for the propitiation and sacrifice of the piglet. After the pūjā the musicians, playing asāre, process with the Magar priest to his home, where they are feasted.

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The Goddess Gaṅga is propitiated annually on the tenth day of the bright half of Baiśakh (Baiśakh śukla daśamī), during another pre-monsoon rain-making rite - lākhpāti ('100,000 leaves'). The Darbār pañcai bājā leads a procession of brāhmins to the banks of the Darauṇḍi River, and plays asāre whilst the priests write the sacred formula ūṃ in cows' milk on each of 100,000 pipal (Ficus religiosa) leaves which then are committed to the river. The ceremony ends with a feast.

Another ritual duty befalls the pañcai bājā on Śrāvaṇ saṃkrānti. At sunset on this day, a pūjā to propitiate the demon Kaṇḍara is performed with the aim of casting out disease - specifically diseases of the skin (luṭo) but more generally, for all maladies and misfortunes. The observance of this rite is particularly appropriate for this time of the year, when most people suffer from some ailment, due to the first heavy rains which pollute water supplies. In the courtyard before the Rāja Darbār, a bonfire is set with sticks of fragrant pine and bundles of twigs, upon a large square consecrated with cowdung. Offerings of achetā, sweetcorn, fruit, abir, water, oil-wick lights, flowers, curd, pipal and mango leaves are made to the bonfire by the head priest of the Darbār, before he lights it. Throughout the pūjā, until the lighting of the fire, the pañcai bājā plays chasore maṅgal from the steps connecting the courtyards of the Kālikā and Rāja Darbārs. As soon as the blaze is established, the priests seize bundles of burning twigs and hurl them from above their heads, over the Darbār walls, shouting "luṭo-puṭo rog gau katira" - 'end to ailments, disease and wounds', and shotguns are fired. Everyone, including the musicians, joins in the throwing of the burning sticks, to expiate disease and misfortune for the coming year.

There are several levels of interpretation of the functions of damāi ritual ensembles. Firstly, they operate as a kind of augmented temple bell (ghaṇṭa) which devotees ring reverently to announce their presence to the deity. The pañcai bājā and nagārā bānā awaken the deity to the presence of the officiant, and to the ritual activity in which he is engaged.

Secondly, the music creates an auspicious environment in which offerings may be bestowed upon the deity. Offerings include those of the nitya

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pūjā (abir, achetā, flowers, curd, incense and wick lights, etc.), blood sacrifices, and readings from sacred texts (pūjā pāth). As with the village bands, the music of the temple ensembles facilitates the traversal of ritual space, but in the latter case, the 'space' is the distance between the divine and human spheres. During ṭhūlo dasaĩ, the pañcai bājā and Kālikā bānā function independently of, but in coordination with other music groups, each of which has its own music and function within the ritual framework.

The ritual music is more resilient to change than the popular repertoire, due to the restraints imposed by the rigid ritual structure in which it is operational. It is unlikely that any item will be dropped from the repertoire and replaced by something new, as each rāg has a specific ritual function. However, the gradual change of the music of the existing repertoire is inevitable, as the musical material is passed on orally from one generation to the next. This process may be accelerated if hereditary rights to musicians' posts are lost, so that newcomers, who have not experienced a nagarci family tradition, take over the musical duties at shrines.

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APPENDIX

NEPALESE CALENDAR AND LUNAR CYCLE

Nepalese Calendar

Baiśakh	(April-May)
Jyeṣṭha	(May-June)
Asār	(June-July)
Śravan	(July-August)
Bhadra	(August-September)
Āśvin	(September-October)
Kartik	(October-November)
Maṅgsir	(November-December)
Pauś	(December-January)
Māgh	(January-February)
Phālgun	(February-March)
Cāit	(March-April)

Important Days of the Lunar Cycle

aūsi	new moon
pañcamī	fifth day of lunar cycle
saṣṭhī	sixth " " " "
aṣṭamī	eighth " " " "
navamī	ninth " " " "
daśamī	tenth " " " "
ekādaśī	eleventh day of lunar cycle
caturdaśī	fourteenth " " " "
purṇimā	full moon

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GLOSSARY

abir	auspicious red powder (a pūjā requirement)
achetā	auspicious paste made from rice, abir and curd (a pūjā requirement)
āgān	square, courtyard
agli	sahanai body
ārati pūjā	offering of oil-wick lights to a deity at sunset
asāre	rāg for the rice-transplanting season (from Asār)
astūti	rāg played at shrines and during pūjās by pañcai bājās other than temple ensembles
atari	pirouette (lip-disc) of sahanai
bādi	caste of tanners/drum-makers/musicians
bainā	'pledge' - booking fee paid to leader of pañcai bājā
Bāīsī	cluster of 22 principalities in 14th-18th century Far-West Nepal
bahinī	younger sister
bāhun	priestly caste (syn. brāhmin)
bājā	1) musical instrument; 2) ensemble of instruments
bajār	town, market
bajāune ropaĩ	music played in the terraces during rice-transplanting
bajāune	to play music
bākya	'language' (from bhāṣa) - melody, piece of music
bāli	payment in crops
bāli ghar biṣṭa	patronage system akin to Indian jajmāni system
bānā	1) musical instrument; 2) ensemble (syn. bājā)
bāno	straight natural horn
bāri	non-irrigated land, vegetable garden
basanta	spring rāg

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batti	oil-wick lights (a pūjā requirement)
beṭhi	payment in kind - one day's forced labour for land-owner
beulī	bride
beulī māgne dhūn	'bride-requesting tune' - piece played prior to the departure of the bride for the home of the groom
beulo	groom
Bhadrakāli	1) sister deity of Kālikā 2) pūjā during the night of phūlpātī (thūlo dasaĩ)
bhāg	'share' - share of feast given to damāi
Bhairav	terrifying aspect of Lord Śiva
Bhairav bājā	straight natural horn (syn. kāhal)
Bhairavī	terrifying aspect of Durgā
bhāle	'cock' - the larger head of the ḍholaki
Bhaṇḍārā aũsi	kul-devatā pūjā of the Kanphaṭā jogis at Gorkhā Darbār
bhāt	cooked rice
bheri	1. natural trumpet; 2. kettledrum (Hindi/Sanskṛt)
bhusiāḥ	large, bowler-hat-shaped cymbals (Newāri)
bijuli-bānā	'lightening/thunderbolt instrument' - natural trumpet in a serpent shape
biṣṭa	landlord, patron
brāhmin	priestly caste
byeṇḍ	band (low English)
cãcari	rāg played after making flower offerings or disposing of phūlpātī
Cāite dasaĩ	one-day festival in honour of Kālikā which falls in the month of Cāit
Caṇḍī	fierce manifestation of the Goddess Durgā
Caṇḍī pāṭh	text from the Markaṇḍeya purāna (syn. Śrī Śrī Caṇḍī)
Caṇḍī purṇimā	Full-moon day of Baiśakh, sacred to the Goddess Caṇḍī
candrabindu	'moon-dot', an auspicious symbol
canduwā	canopy hung over a consecrated area
caṛāunu	to offer
Caubīsī	cluster of 24 principalities in 14th-18th century West Nepal
cautāra	road-side resting place
chasore maṅgal	auspicious rāg for general use at temples by ritual ensembles
chetri	warrior caste (syn. kṣatriya)
chewar	tonsure ceremony
ḍuḍka	dance and instrumental piece
dahi	curd

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damāhā	large kettledrum
damāi	caste of tailor/musicians
ḍamaru	hour-glass pellet drum (one of Śiva's emblems)
dam nagārā	'great kettledrums' - enormous pair of kettledrums for ritual or military use
darbār	palace
darji	tailor
dasaĩ ghar	pūjā room established for duration of thūlo dasaĩ
deutā	deity (syn. devatā)
deutā koṭha	pūjā room (syn. pūjā koṭha)
devatā	deity (syn. deutā)
Devī	Mother Goddess
dhān	unhusked rice, paddy
dhān nāc	Limbu dance of the rice-transplanting season
ḍhol	1. tenor drum (Nep.) 2. double-headed drum (Hindi)
ḍholaki	double-headed barrel drum
dhop bānā	natural trumpet
dhūn	tune
dohari gīt	duet song
ḍoli	litter made from a piece of cloth supported by a pole
ḍoko	basket
ḍokoko gāī	cow representation made from a basket (for gāī jātrā)
duicāle	item of wedding repertoire of East Nepal
Durgā	Mother Goddess, embodiment of female sexual energy
dvāre	royal representative
ekcāle	item of wedding repertoire of East Nepal
gāī	cow
gāī-jātrā	'cow procession' - Newāri festival in honour of deceased relatives
gajo	stick (i.e. for playing drum) (plural: gaja)
gandharva	celestial musician - name adopted by gāine
Gaṇeś	Elephant-headed God, son of Śiva
gāũ	village
gāũ pañcāyat	local council and the area for which it is responsible
ghaṇṭa	bell (particularly of temples)
ghanto nāc	Magar and Gurung trance-dance
ghaṭasṭhāpanā	first day of the thūlo dasaĩ festival
Gorakhnāth	deified Śivaite saint - protecting deity of the Śāha dynasty
gorakhpāṭī	pavilion from which musicians play for Gorakhnāth

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goya	plaited rings of cane for securing sahanai body
guphā	cave
gūrū	teacher
Gurung	Nepalese minority of the hills of West Nepal
guṭhi	land-based organization supporting a temple
hile-jātrā	'mud procession' - festival at the end of the rice-transplanting season (syn. ropaĩ jātrā)
huḍka	hour-glass drum of Far-West Nepal
huḍki	damāi sub-caste of Far-West Nepal - players of huḍka
iṣṭa-devatā	protecting (personal) deity
jajmāni	patronage system in India (Hindi)
Jālandhar	venerated saint of the Kanphaṭā jogis
jaldhāra	rain-making festival
jamara	barley
janai purṇimā	annual festival during which the sacred thread is replaced
janta	wedding procession
janti	member of a wedding procession
jāt	sort, kind, caste
jātrā	procession, festival
jetho	eldest
jhyāli	cymbals
jhyāmta	cymbals (syn. jhyāli)
jhyāure	instrumental piece of pañcai bājā repertoire
jillā	administrative zone, district
jogi	ascetic, religious mendicant
jor damāhā	pair of kettledrums
jugi	1) Newār tailor-musician caste (syn. kusle) 2) patronage system of Terai (syn. bāli ghar biṣṭa)
kāhal	natural horn
kalaś	water pot embodying the spirit of Kālikā
kālrātri	'black night' - ceremony on the night of Mahāṣṭamī
kāmi	blacksmith caste
kancho	youngest, smallest
Kanphaṭā	'split ears' - religious sect who venerate Gorakhnāth
kanyā keṭī	pre-pubescent girls
karnāl	natural trumpet
karnāli bājā	natural trumpet of Far-West Nepal
kasāi	Newār caste of butchers
khaṛgamāī pūjā	ceremony for the sacrificial knives on the night of phūlpātī (thūlo dasaĩ)

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khyāli	instrumental piece of pañcai bājā repertoire
khet	irrigated field (i.e. for rice growing)
koṭ	fortress
Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī	festival celebrating the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa
kul-devatā	family deity
kulcinī	woman of the royal household who escorts the sacred kalaś during dasaĩ
kus	a type of grass (Poa cynosuroides) used for ritual purposes
kusle	Newār caste of tailor musicians (syn. jugi)
laba	natural trumpet (Chinese)
lalakhīṃ	double-headed barrel drum (Newāri)
laṛi	rhythmic sequence (like a drum-roll) played on nagārā (syn. murrā)
Limbu	minority group of the hills of Far East Nepal
lugā chekne pūjā	clothes offering ceremony performed by a damāi before a wedding
mādal	double-headed barrel drum
Magar	minority group of West-Central Nepalese hills
Mahādev	Lord Śiva
mahānavamī	'great ninth' - ninth day of thūlo dasaĩ festival
mahāṣṭamī	'great eighth' - eighth day of thūlo dasaĩ festival
Mahiṣāsura	buffalo-demon slain by Durgā
malaśrī	seasonal rāg for dasaĩ
māna	a measure of weight equal to about 0.5kg
Manakāmanā	sister Goddess of Kālikā
maṇḍala	a symbolical geometric diagram
maṅgal	auspicious
maṅgalinī	professional female singer of auspicious songs attached to the royal household
māru	item of ritual repertoire played during the consecration of a sacrificial area (syn. rekhi hālne bākya)
masālā	mixture of turmeric and curd for drum heads
māthura	plaited leather thong threaded under kettledrum lacing
maulo	post to which animals are tethered for sacrifice
mohori	shawm (Hindi)
mori	mouthpiece of trumpets and horns
mṛdaṅga	double-headed barrel drum
muralli	bamboo notch flute
muri	a measure of weight, approximately 80kg
muri māṭo	measure of the productivity of land

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murrā	rhythmic sequence (lika a drum-roll) played on nagārā (syn. laṛi)
muṭhi	a measure of weight equivalent to a handful
nābhi	base-ring of a kettledrum to which lacing is attached
nāc	dance
nagārā	large kettledrum used for ritual music
nagārā bānā	ritual ensemble including nagārā
nagarci	1) player of nagārā 2) damāi temple musician
nagasvaram	shawm of South India
nāg-beli bājā	'serpent-shaped instrument' - a natural trumpet
nāg-phani	Indian serpent-shapeo trumpet (Hindi)
nāike	leader, organizer
nal	reed (of sahanai)
nali	staple of sahanai
nalmuri	mandrel used to support sahanai reed
naqqara khāna	ensemble of kettledrums, shawms and trumpets (Arabic)
Nārāyaṇ	Lord Viṣṇu
narsiṅga	natural horn
nāth	straight natural horn of Kanphaṭā jogis
nauba	1) ensemble of kettledrums (syn. naqqara khāna) (Hindi) 2) periodic playing of kettledrum ensemble (Arabic)
naubat	ensemble of kettledrums, shawms and trumpets (syn. naqqara khāna) (Hindi)
naumati bājā	pañcai bājā with nine instruments
navagā	sacrificial rāg of ritual repertoire
navarātri	'nine nights' - the first nine days of thūlo dasaĩ
negĩyar	leader, organizer (syn. nāike)
Newār	indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley
nisān	1) flag, banner; 2) kettledrum (Hindi)
nitya pūjā	daily, regular offering of abir, achetā, flowers,etc. to deity (syn. nim pūjā)
paisā	1) money; 2) denomination of currency - 100 paisā = 1 rupee
pānas	ritual lampstand
pañc(a)	five (emphatic form - pañcai)
pañca boli	'five offerings' - buffalo, goat, duck, chicken, sheep
pañca dhātu	'five metals' - gold, silver, brass, copper and zinc
pañca vādya	'five instruments' (Hindi)
pañcai bājā	'five instruments' - damāi ensemble of kettledrums, shawms and trumpets or horns

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pañcamahāśabda	'five great sounds' (Sanskṛt)
pañcāyat	local council and the area for which it is responsible
pāp lāgnu	to incur guilt, sin
pāsna	ceremony of feeding a baby its first solid food (syn. annaprāśan, bhāt khuwai)
patākā	flag, banner
paṭanginī	sacrificial courtyard
pāṭh	lesson, text
pāthi	a measure of weight equivalent to about 3kg
pāṭī	pavilion
phāgu	seasonal rāg of the month of Phālgun
phāgu khelne	'playing with colours' - throwing red powder and dye
pheṭā	turban cloth
phuli	bell of sahanai
phūlko ḍoli	litter carrying flower offerings
phūlpātī	1) seventh day of thulo dasaĩ festival; 2) sacred bel-tree twig, leaves and flowers embodying spirit of Kālikā
pradakṣiṇā	clockwise circumambulation of a shrine
prasād	offerings which have been made to a deity
pūjā	act of worship
pūjā pāṭh	ritual reading of a sacred text
Rāi	minority group of East Nepalese hills
rāja	king
Rājput	native of Rajputana (Rajasthan) of the warrior caste
raksi	highly intoxicating spirit (Mother's milk to musicians)
rama	maraccas
rāmāyaṇ	life-history of a deceased relative sung during gāī-jātrā
rāsa	1) rāg played by nagārā bānās at temples; 2) the sahanai which plays this rāg
rasan	shawm (Newāri)
rateulī	1) party for bridegroom's female relatives; 2) obscene song sung at such a party
rath	chariot, portable shrine of deity
rath jātrā	chariot carried in procession
rekhi	rice-flour used to draw maṇḍalas
reaũti pūjā	ceremony on the night of Mahānavamī when the king's horse is propitiated
ropaĩ	rice transplanting
roṭ	'bread' - unleavened bread offered to Gorakhnāth
sagunijāt	'auspicious ones' - epithet of the damāi

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Śāha	dynasty of the House of Gorkha responsible for the unification of Nepal
sahanai	shawm
śahnāī	shawm (Hindi)
sait	luck
sā̃jh pūjā	offering of oil-wick lights to a deity at sunset (syn. ārati pūjā)
samkrānti	first day of the month, entry of the sun into a new zodiacal sign
saṃvat	era
śaṅkha	conch
śaṅkha dhuni	Tantric rite performed during dasaĩ
sāraṅgi	four-stringed bowed fiddle played by gāine
Saraswati	1) Goddess of Learning; 2) trance-dance (syn. bhoṭeselo)
sārki	caste of tanners/shoemakers
sattār	enormous buffalo, representing Mahiṣāsura, sacrificed at thūlo dasaĩ
sattār-kaṭne bākya	rāg played for the sacrifice of the sattār
sĩdur	red powder placed in the hair-parting of a married woman
sikhār	natural trumpet
sinajya	rāg of the rice-transplanting season (Newāri)
siṅgnād	whistle of the Kanphaṭā jogis
Śivarātri	festival in honour of Lord Śiva
sojho rāg	'straight, simple rāg' - initial rāg of pañcai bājā performances
sor	1) tonic note; 2) drone (on the tonic); 3) sahanai which plays the drone
susāre	servant, attendant at a temple
śraddhā	funeral rites
sriṅga	horn (Saṃskṛt)
swiru	double-layer mouthpiece construction of horns and trumpets
tabl khāna	Middle Eastern military band (Arabic)
tamar	side/snare drum
tamrakar	Newāri coppersmith caste (Newāri)
tānā	lacing (for drums)
Thakāli	minority group of Far-West Nepalese hills
thūlo dasaĩ	two-week festival of blood sacrifice in honour of Kālikā
tīj	women's festival
ṭikā	an auspicious mark on the forehead in red paste or powder

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tihār	festival of lights in honour of Lakṣmī
toran	streamer made from leaves and flowers
ṭyāṁko	small kettledrum
urāli	narsiṅga call of East Nepal
vaṃśavali	royal genealogy
vijayā daśamī	'glorious tenth' - tenth day of dasaĩ festival
vratabandha	sacred thread investiture ceremony
zurna	shawm (Turkish)

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CORRIGENDA

Page	Errata	Corrigenda
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List of Tables	Table 4	Table 4: Gorkha Darbār guṭhi - Land entitlements of musicians
Preface	Darbar	Darbār
1, etc.	jhyāmta	jhyāmṭa
3, etc.	nagārā	nagarā
4, etc.	Baglung	Bāgluṅg
	Myagdi	Myāgdi
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	Nuwakot	Nuwākoṭ
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7	beuli	beulī
7, etc.	Kalikot	Kālikoṭ
7, etc.	brahmin	brāhmaṇ
9	Lagāmkoṭ	Laghāmkoṭ
13, etc.	Sallyankot	Salyānkoṭ
14	ast	at
14, etc.	naqqara	naqqārā
18, etc.	vamśavalī	vamśāvalī
18	Nārāyani	Nārāyaṇi
22, etc.	nagarci	nagārci
24, etc.	sattār	satār
24, etc.	kulcinī	kalaśinī
24, etc.	muralli	murali
55	dholaki	ḍholaki
56, etc.	malaśrī	mālaśrī
56	marū	māru
56, etc.	Bhairavi	Bhairavī
Plate 31	damaha	damāhā
67, etc.	Karnāli	Karṇāli
69, etc.	chegne	chekne
75, etc.	vijaya	vijayā

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164	damahas	damāhās
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173	khycari	khaijari
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178	pancai	pañcai
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205	annointed	anointed
211	susare	susāre
211	pancai	pañcai
212	annoint	anoint
221	bajāune	bajāunu
228	samkranti	saṃkrānti

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